THE

# SCOTTISH CHIEFS

## A ROMANCE

IN FIVE VOLUMES

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AUTHOR OF THADDEUS OF WARSAW, AND REMARKS ON SIDNEY'S APHORISMS.

There comes a voice that awakes my soul. It is the voice of years that are gone; they roll before me with all their deeds.

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# SCOTTISH CHIEFS.

## CHAP. I.

BEFORE the sun rose, every brave Scot, within a few hours march of Stirling, was on the Carse; and Lord Andrew Murray, with his veteran Clydesdale men, was already resting on his arms in view of the city walls. The messengers of Wallace hastened with the speed of the winds, east and west; and the noon of the day saw him at the head of 30,000 men, determined to fight or to die for their country.

The surrounding landscape shone in

the brightness of midsummer; for it was the eve of St. Magdalen, and sky and earth bore witness to the luxuriant month of July. The heavens were clear, the waters of the Forth danced in the sunbeams; and the flower-enamelled green of the extended plain, stretched its beautiful borders to the deepening woods. All nature smiled; all seemed in harmony and peace but the breast of man. He who was made lord of this paradise, moved forward to disturb its repose, to disfigure its loveliness! As the thronging legions poured upon the plain, the sheep which had been feeding there, fled, scared to the hills; the plover and heathfowl which nestled in the brakes, rose affrighted from their infant broods, and flew in screaming multitudes far over the receding vallies. The peace of Scotland was again broken, and its flocks and herds were to share its misery!

When the conspiring lords appeared on the Carse, and Mar communicated to

them the lately discovered treason, they so well affected surprise at the contents of the scroll, that it is probable Wallace might not have suspected their connexion with it, had not Lord Athol declared it altogether a forgery of some wanton person; and then added with bitterness, "to gather an army on such authority, is ridiculous." While he spoke, Wallace regarded him with a look which, Athol meeting, pierced him to the centre; and the blood rushing into his guilty heart, for once in his life he trembled before the eye of a man. "Whoever be the degenerate Scot to whom this writing is addressed," said Wallace, "his baseness shall not betray us farther. The troops of Scotland shall be in the Lothians to-morrow; and woe be to the man who that day deserts his country!"—"Amen!" cried Lord Mar.—"Amen!" sounded from every lip: for, when the conscience embraces treason against its earthly rulers, allegiance to its heavenly King is aban-

doned with ease;—and the words and oaths of the traitor are equally unstable.

Badenoch's eye followed that of Wallace, and his suspicions fixed where the Regent's fell. For the honour of his blood, he forbore to accuse the earl; but for the same reason he determined to watch his proceedings. However, the hypocrisy of Athol, baffled even the penetration of his brother; and on his retiring from the ground to call forth his men for the expedition, in an affected chafe he complained to Badenoch of the stigma cast upon their house by the Regent's implied charge. "But," said he, "he shall this day see the honour of Cummin emblazoned with blood on the sands of the Forth! His towering pride heeds not where it strikes; and this comes of raising men of low estate to rule over princes!"—"His birth is noble, if not royal;" replied Badenoch; "and, before this, the posterity of kings have not disdained to

recover their liberty by the sword of a brave subject." "True;" answered Athol; "but is it customary for princes to allow that subject to sit on their throne? It is nonsense to talk of Wallace having refused a coronation. He laughs at the name; but see you not that he openly affects supreme power; that he rules the nobles of the land like a despot? His word, his nod, is sufficient.—*Go here, go there!*—as if he were absolute, and there was no voice in Scotland but his own! Look at the brave Mack Callanmore,([a]) the lord of the west of Scotland from sea to sea; he stands unbonnetted before this mighty Wallace, with a more abject homage than ever he paid to the house of Alexander! Can you behold this, Lord Badenoch, and not find the royal blood of your descent boil in your veins? Does not every look of your wife,([b]) the sister of a king; and your own rights, stamped upon your soul, reproach you? He is greater by your strength. Humble him,

my brother; be faithful to Scotland, but humble its proud dictator!"

Lord Badenoch replied to this rough exhortation, with the tranquillity belonging to his nature: "I see not the least foundations for any of your charges against Sir William Wallace. He has delivered Scotland, and the people are grateful. The nation, with one voice made him their Regent; and he fulfils the duties of his office:—but with a moderation and modesty, Lord Athol, which, I must affirm, I never saw equalled. I must dissent from you in all you have said:—and I confess, that I did fear that the blandishing arguments of the faithless Cospatrick had persuaded you to embrace his pernicious treason. You deny it:—that is well. Prove your innocence this day in the field, against Scotland's enemies; and John of Badenoch will then see no impending cloud, to darken the honour of the name of Cummin!"

The brothers immediately separated;

and Athol, calling his cousin Buchan, laid a new plot to counteract the vigilance of the Regent: one of their means was, to baffle his measures, by stimulating the less treasonable, but yet discontented chieftains, to thwart him in every point. At the head of this last class, was John Stewart, Earl of Bute. During the whole of the preceding year, he was in Norway; and he returned to Scotland just on the triumphal entry of Wallace into Stirling. Athol, aware of the consequence Stewart's name would attach to a cause, gained his ear before he was introduced to the Regent; and so poisoned his mind against Wallace, that all that was well in him, he deemed ill; and ever spoke of his bravery with coldness, and of his patriotism with disgust: he believed him a hypocrite; and as such, despised and abhorred him.

While Athol marshalled his rebellious ranks, Wallace led forth his loyal barons to take their stations at the heads of their

different clans. Sir Alexander Scrymgeour, with the proudest expectations for Scotland, unfurled his golden standard to the sun. The lords Loch-awe and Bothwell, with others, rode on the right of the Regent. Lord Andrew Murray, with the brave Sir John Graham, and a bevy of young knights, kept the ground on his left. Wallace looked around: Edwin was far away; and he felt but half appointed, when wanting his youthful sword-bearer. That faithful friend did not even know of the threatened hostility; for, to have intimated to Lord Ruthven a danger he could not assist to repel, would have inflamed his disorder by anxiety, and perhaps hurried him to dissolution.

As the Regent moved forward, with these private affections chequering his public cares, the heralds blew the trumpets of his approach, and a hundred embattled clans appeared in the midst of the plain, awaiting their valiant leaders. Each chieftain advanced to the head of his line,

and stood to hear the charge of Wallace.

"Brave Scots!" cried he, "I hope this day will be the last of Southron invasion! Treachery has admitted the enemy whom resolute patriotism had driven from our borders.—Be steady in your fidelity to Scotland, and he who has hitherto protected the just cause, will nerve your arms to lay invasion and its base coadjutor again in the dust!"

"Lead us to victory!" cried the eager soldiers, striking their shields at the inspiring voice of their leader. Wallace waved his sword in token to the chieftains to fall back towards their legions; and while some appeared to linger, Athol, armed cap-a-pee, and spurring his roan into the area before the Regent, demanded, in a haughty tone, "Which of the Scots, then in the field, was to lead the vanguard?"

"The Regent of Scotland;" replied

Wallace, for once asserting the majesty of his station; "and you, Lord Athol, with the Lord Buchan, are to defend your country under the command of the brave head of your house, the princely Badenoch." "I stir not from this spot," returned Athol, fiercely striking his lance into its rest, "till I see the honour of my country established in the eyes of the world, by a leader, worthy of her rank amongst the nations, being placed in her vanguard."

"What he says," cried Buchan, "I second." "And in the same spirit, chieftain of Ellerslie," exclaimed Lord Bute, "do I offer to Scotland, myself and my people. Another must lead the van, or I retire from her standard."

"Speak on!" cried Wallace, more surprised than confounded, by this extraordinary attack.

"What these illustrious chiefs have uttered, is the voice of us all!" was the

general exclamation from a band of warriors, who now thronged around the incendiary nobles.

"Your reign is over, proud chieftain!" rejoined Athol; "the Scottish ranks are no longer to be cajoled by your affected moderation. We see the tyrant in your insidious smile, we feel him in the despotism of your decrees. To be thus ridden by a man of vulgar blood; to present him as the head of our nation to the King of England, is beneath the dignity of our country, is an insult to her nobles: and therefore, in the power of her consequence, I speak; and again demand of you, to yield the vanguard to one more worthy of the station. Before God and St. Magdalen, I swear," added he, holding up his sword to the heavens, "that I will not stir an inch this day towards the enemy, unless a Cummin or a Stewart lead our army!"

"And is this your resolution, also, Lord Bute?" said Wallace, looking on

Stewart. "It is;" was the reply; "a foe like Edward, ought to be met as becomes a great and independent kingdom! We go in the array of an unanimous nation, to repel him; not as a band of insurgents, headed by a general, who, however brave, was yet drawn from the common ranks of the people. I therefore demand to follow a more illustrious leader to the field."

"I am of the same opinion;" cried Buchan; "the eagles have long enough followed their owl in peacock's feathers; and being tired of the game, I, like the rest, soar upward again!"

"Resign that bâton of command!" cried Athol: "give place to a more honourable leader!" repeated he, supposing that he had intimidated Wallace: but Wallace, raising the visor of his helmet, which he had closed on his last commands to his generals, looked on Athol with all the majesty of his truly royal soul in his eyes; "Earl," said he, "the voice of the

three estates of Scotland declared me their Regent; and God ratified the election, by the victories with which he crowned me. If in ought I have betrayed my trust, let the powers which raised me, be my accusers. Four pitched battles have I fought, and gained for this country. Twice, I beat the representatives of King Edward on the plains of Scotland; and a few months ago, I made him fly before me over the fields of Northumberland! What then has befallen me, that my army is to be afraid to meet this man? Has the oil of the Lord, with which the Saint of Dunkeld anointed my brows, lost its virtue, that I should shrink before any king in Christendom? I neither tremble at the name of Edward, nor will I so disgrace my own (which never man who bore it ever degraded by swearing fealty to a foreign prince) as to abandon at such a crisis the power with which Scotland has invested me. Whoever chuses to leave the cause of their country; let them go,

and so manifest themselves of noble blood; I remain, and I lead the van-guard!—Soldiers, to your duty!"

As he spoke with a voice of unanswerable command, several chieftains fell back into their ranks; Lord Bute, hardly knew what to think, so was he startled by the appeal of the accused Regent, and the noble frankness with which he maintained his rights. He stood frowning, as Wallace turned to him, and said, "Do you, my lord, adhere to these violent men? or am I to consider a chief who, notwithstanding his hostility to me, was generous in his ire, still faithful to Scotland in spite of his prejudice against her leader? Will you fight her battles?"

"I shall never desert her cause;" replied Stewart: "'tis truth I seek; therefore, be it to you, Wallace, this day, according to your conscience!" Wallace bowed his head, and presented him the truncheon round which his line of battle

was wrapped. On opening it, he found that he was appointed to command the third division; Badenoch and Bothwell, to the first and second; and Wallace himself to the vanguard.

Scouts at that instant came up, and informed the Regent that the English army were near the boundary of Linlithgow, and must, from the rapidity of their march, be on the Carron before evening. On this intelligence, Wallace put his troops to their speed; and before the sun had declined far towards the west, he was within view of Falkirk. He had not communicated to the rest of his chieftains, the subject of his conference with the tumultuous lords on the Carse of Stirling: they were out of hearing of what was said; and Wallace, hoping that the dispute was now ended, thought it best not to disturb his friends on this momentous day, with the knowledge of so refractory a commencement. But just at the instant when he had crossed the Car-

ron, and the Southron banners appeared in sight, Lord Athol, at the head of his rebellious colleagues, rode up to him. Stewart kept his appointed station; and Badenoch, doing the same, ashamed of his brother's disorder, though ignorant of his revolt, called after him to keep his line. The obstinate chief, regardless of all check, galloped on; and extending his bold accomplices across the path of the Regent, demanded of him, on the penalty of his life, that moment to relinquish his pretensions to the vanguard.

"I am not come here," replied Wallace, indignantly, "to betray my country! I know you, Lord Athol: and your conduct and mine, will this day prove, who is most worthy the confidence of Scotland."

"This day," cried Athol, "shall see you lay down the power you have usurped."

"It shall see me maintain it to your confusion;" replied Wallace; "and were you not surrounded by Scots, of too tried a worth, to suspect their being influenced

by your rebellious example, I would this moment make you feel the arm of justice. But the foe is in sight: do your duty now, sir earl; and for the sake of the house to which you belong, even this intemperate conduct shall be forgotten." At this instant Sir John Graham hastening forward, exclaimed, "The Southrons are bearing down upon us!" Athol glanced at their distant host, and turning on Wallace, with a sarcastic smile, "My actions," cried he, "shall indeed decide the day!" and striking his spurs furiously into his horse, he re-joined Lord Badenoch's legion.

Edward did indeed advance in most terrible array. Above a hundred thousand men swelled his numerous ranks; and with these were united all from the Lothians and Teviot dale, whom the influence of the faithless March, and the vindictive Soulis, could bring into the field. With this augmented host, and a deter-

mination to conquer or to die, the Southrons marched rapidly forward.

Wallace had drawn himself up on the ascent of the hill of Falkirk; and advantageously planted his archers on a covering eminence, flanked by the legions of Badenoch.—Lord Athol, who knew the integrity of his brother, and who cared not in so great a cause (for so his ambition termed it) how he removed an adversary from Edward, and a censor from himself, had given orders to his emissaries; and on the moment when the trumpet of Wallace sounded the charge, and the arrows from the hill darkened the air, the virtuous Badenoch, was stabbed through the back to the heart. Athol, who had placed himself near for the purpose, immediately threw himself upon the man who had committed the deed, and wounding him in the same vital part, exclaimed, holding up his dagger, "Behold the weapon that has slain the assassin

hired by Sir William Wallace!—Thus it is that his ambition would rob Scotland of her native princes. Let us fly from his steel, to the shield of a king and a hero."

The poison took.—The men had seen their leader fall; they doubted not the words of his brother; and with a shout exclaiming, "Whither you lead we follow!" They at once turned towards him. "Seize the traitor's artillery!" At this command they mounted the hill; and the archers, little expecting an assault from their countrymen, were either instantly cut down, or hurried away prisoners by Athol and Buchan; who, now, at the head of the whole division of the Cummins, galloped towards the Southrons, and with loud cries of "Long live King Edward!" threw themselves at once into their arms. The squadrons which followed Stewart not knowing but they might be hurried into similar desertion, hesitated in the charge he com-

manded them to make; and, while thus undecisive, some obeyed in broken ranks, and others, lingered, the enemy advanced briskly up, surrounded the division, and on the first onset slew its leader.—His faithful Brandanes ([c]) seeing their beloved commander trampled to the earth by an overwhelming foe, fell into the most disastrous confusion; and communicating their dismay to their comrades, the whole division sank under the shock of the Southrons as if touched by a spell. Bothwell, meanwhile, and his legions, was fiercely engaged with the Earl of Lincoln, and his, amid the swamps of a deep morass; and being involved by reciprocal impetuosity, equal peril engulphed them both. The firm battalion of the vanguard, alone remained unbroken; and stood before the pressing, and now victorious thousands of Edward, without receding a step. The archers being lost by the treachery of the Cummins, all hope lay on the strength of the

spear and sword; and Wallace, standing immoveable as the rock of Stirling, rank after rank of his dauntless infantry was mowed down by the Southron arrows; but fast as they fell, their comrades closed over them, and still presented the same impenetrable front of steady valour. The King of England, indignant at this pause in his conquering onset, accompanied by his natural brother, the valiant Frere de Briangy, and a whole squadron of resolute knights, charged full against the Scottish pikemen. Wallace, descrying the jewelled crest of Edward amidst the cloud of battle, rushed forward, and hand to hand engaged the King. Edward knew his adversary, not so much by his snow-white plume, as by the prowess of his arm. Twice did the heavy claymore of Wallace strike fire from the steely helmet of the monarch; but at the third stroke, the glittering diadem fell in shivers to the ground, and the royal blood of Edward followed the blow. He reeled,—and another

stroke would have settled the freedom of Scotland for ever, had not the strong arm of Frere de Briangy passed between Wallace and the King. The combat thickened: blow followed blow; blood gushed at each fall of the sword; and the hacked armour shewed a grisly wound in every aperture. A hundred weapons seemed directed against the breast of the Regent of Scotland, when, raising his sword with a determined stroke, it cleft the visor and crest of De Briangy, and he fell lifeless to the ground. The cry of dismay that issued from the Southron troops at this sight, again nerved the vengeful Edward; and ordering the signal to be given for his reserve to advance by a circuitous path round the hill, he renewed the attack; and assaulting Wallace with all the fury of his heart in his eyes and arms; he tore the earth with the trampling of disappointed vengeance, when he found that the invincible phalanx still stood firm. "I

will reach him yet!" cried he; and turning to De Valence, he commanded that the new artillery should be called into action. A general blast of all the trumpets in the Southron army blew; the war-wolfs sent forth showers of red-hot stones into the midst of the Scottish battalions; and, at the same moment, the reserve charging round the hill, attacked them in flank, and accomplished what the fiery torrent had begun. The field was heaped with dead; the brooks which flowed down the heights, ran with blood; but no confusion was there: no, not even in the mind of Wallace, though struck with amazement and horror, at beholding the saltire of Annandale, the banner of Bruce, leading onward the exterminating division! Scot now contended with Scot, brother with brother. Those valiant spirits who had left their country twenty years before, to accompany their chief to the Holy Land, now re-entered Scotland to wound her in her

vital part; to wrest from her her liberties; to make her mourn in ashes, that she had been the mother of such matricides. A horrid mingling of tartans with tartans, in the direful grasp of reciprocal death; a tremendous rushing of the flaming artillery, which swept the Scottish ranks like blasting lightning; for a moment seemed to make the reason of their leader stagger. Arrows winged with fire, flashed through the air; and sticking in men and beasts, drove them against each other in maddening pain. Twice was the horse of Wallace shot under him; and on every side were his closest friends wounded and dispersed. But his terrific horror at the scene, passed away in the moment of its perception; and though the Southron and the Bruce pressed on him in overwhelming numbers, his few remaining ranks obeyed his call; and with a presence of mind, and military skill that was exhaustless, he maintained the fight till darkness parted the combat-

ants. When Edward gave command for his troops to rest till morning, Wallace, with the remnant of his faithful band, slowly re-crossed the Carron, intending that they also should repose, till dawn should renew the conflict.

Lonely was the sound of his bugle, as sitting on a fragment of the druidical ruins of Dunipacis, he blew its melancholy blast to summon his chieftains around him.—Its penetrating voice pierced the hills; but no answering note came upon his ear: the leaders of his divisions were slain.—A cold conviction of the reality seized upon his heart. But they might have fled far distant!—He blushed as the thought crossed him; and hopeless again, dropped the horn which he had raised to blow a second summons. At this instant he saw a shadow darken the moonlight ruins, and Scrymgeour, who had gladly heard his commander's bugle, hastened forward.

"What has been the fate of this dismal

day?" asked Wallace, looking onward, as if he expected others to come up: "Where are my friends?—Where Graham, Badenoch, and Bothwell?—Where all, brave Scrymgeour, that I do not now see?" He rose from his seat at sight of an advancing group.—It approached near, and laid the dead body of a warrior down before him. "Thus," cried one of the supporters, in stifled sounds, "has my father proved his love for Scotland!" —It was Murray who spoke; it was the Earl of Bothwell that lay a breathless corpse at his feet!

"Grievous has been the havoc of Scot on Scot!" cried the intrepid Graham, who had seconded the arm of Murray in the contest for his father's body: "Your steadiness, Sir William Wallace, would have retrieved the day, but for the murderer of his country; that Bruce, for whom you refused to be our king, thus destroys her bravest sons.—Their blood be on his head!" cried he, extending

his martial arms towards heaven; "Power of Justice hear! and let his days be troubled, and his death covered with dishonour!"

"My brave friend!" replied Wallace, "his deeds will avenge themselves; he needs not further malediction. Let us rather turn to bless the remains of him who is gone before us, in glory, to his heavenly rest!—Ah! better is it thus to be laid in the bed of honour, than, by surviving, witness the calamities which the double treason of this day will bring upon our martyred country!—Murray, my friend!" cried he, to Lord Andrew, "we must not let the brave dead perish in vain! Their monument shall yet be Scotland's liberties."

Tears were coursing each other in mute woe down the cheeks of the affectionate son. He could not for some time answer Wallace, but he grasped his hand, and at last rapidly articulated; "Others may have fallen; but not mortally like

him. Life may yet be preserved in some of our brave companions. Leave me, then, to mourn my dead alone!"

Wallace saw that filial tenderness yearned for the moment when it might unburthen its grief unchecked by observation. He arose, and making a sign to his friends, withdrew towards his men. Having sent a small detachment to guard the sacred enclosure of Dunipacis, he dispatched Graham on the dangerous duty of seeking a reinforcement for the morning; and sending Scrymgeour, with a resolute band across the Carron to bring in the wounded, (for Edward had encamped his army about a mile south of the field of action;) he took his solitary course along the northern bank, towards a shallow ford, near which he supposed the squadrons of Lord Lochawe must have fought, and where he hoped to gain accounts of him from some straggling survivor of his clan. When he arrived at the spot where the river is narrowest, and winds its

dark stream beneath impending heights, he blew the Campbell pibroch: the notes reverberated from rock to rock; but, unanswered, died away in distant echoes. Still he would not relinquish hope; and pursuing the path, emerged on an open glade. The unobstructed rays of the moon illumined every object. Across the river, at some distance, a division of the Southron tents whitened the deep shadows of the bordering woods; and before them, on their blood-stained bank, he thought he descried a solitary warrior.—Wallace stopped.—The man approached the margin of the stream, and looked towards the Scottish chief.—The visor of Wallace being up, discovered his heroic countenance bright in the moonbeams; and the majesty of his mien, seemed to declare him to the Southron knight, to be no other than the Regent of Scotland.

"Who art thou?" cried the warrior, with a voice of command, that better be-

came his lips, than it was adapted to the man whom he addressed.

"The enemy of England!" cried the chief.

"Thou art Wallace!" was the immediate reply; "none else dare answer the Lord of Carrick and Annandale with such a haughty boldness."

"Every Scot in this land," returned Wallace, inflamed with an indignation he did not attempt to repress; "would thus answer Bruce, not only in reference to England, but to himself! to that Bruce, who, not satisfied with having abandoned his people to their enemies, has stolen, a base fratricide, to slay his brethren in their home! To have met them on the plain of Stanmore, would have been a deed his posterity might have bewailed; but what horror, what shame will be theirs, when they know that he came to ruin his own rights, to stab his people, in the very bosom of his country!—I come from gazing on the murdered body

of the virtuous Earl of Bothwell: the lords Bute and Fyfe, and perhaps Lochawe, have fallen beneath the Southron sword and your unnatural arm; and yet do you demand, what Scot would dare to tell you, that he holds the Earl of Carrick and his coadjutors, as his most mortal foes?"

"Ambitious man! Dost thou flatter thyself with belief that I am to be deceived by thy pompous declamation? I know the motive of all this pretended patriotism. I am well informed of the aim of all this vaunted prowess; and I came, not to fight the battles of King Edward, but to punish the proud usurper of the rights of Bruce.—I have gained my point.—My brave followers, slew the Lord of Bothwell; my brave followers, made the hitherto invincible Sir William Wallace, retreat!—I came in the power of my birth-right: and, as your lawful King, I command you, this hour, to lay your rebel sword at my feet.—Obey, proud knight; or to-

morrow puts you into Edward's hand; and without appeal, you die the death of a traitor."

"Unhappy prince;" cried Wallace, now suspecting that Bruce had been deceived; "is it over the necks of your most loyal subjects, that you would mount your throne?—How have you been mistaken!—How have you strengthened the hands of your enemy, and weakened your own, by this day's action!—The cause is now, probably, lost for ever:—and from whom are we to date its ruin, but from him, to whom the nation looked as to its appointed deliverer! From him, whose once honoured name, will now be regarded with execration!"

"Burthen not my name, rash young man," replied Bruce, "with the charges belonging to your own mad ambition.—Who disturbed the peace, in which Scotland reposed after the battle of Dunbar, but William Wallace? Who raised the

country in arms, but William Wallace? Who stole from me my birth-right, and fastened the people's love on himself, but William Wallace? Who affected to repel a crown, that he might the more certainly fix it on his head, but William Wallace? And who dares now taunt me with his errors and mishaps, but the same traitor to his lawful sovereign?"

"Shall I answer thee, Lord of Carrick," replied Wallace, "with a similar appeal?—Who, when the Southron tyrant preferred a false claim to the supremacy of this realm, subscribed to the falsehood; and by that action, did all in his power to make a free people slaves?—Who, when the brand of cruelty swept this kingdom from shore to shore, lay indolent in the usurper's court, and heard of these oppressions without a sigh? Who, horror on horror! brought an army into his own inheritance, to lay it desolate before his mortal foe?—Thy heart will tell thee, Bruce, who is this man: and if honour

yet remain in that iron region, thou wilt not disbelieve the asseverations of an honest Scot, who declares, that it was to save them whom thou didst abandon, that he appeared in the armies of Scotland. It was to supply the place of thy desertion, that he assumed the rule with which a grateful people, rescued from bondage, invested him."

"Bold chieftain!" exclaimed Bruce, "is it thus you continue to brave your offended prince? But in pity to your youth, in admiration of a prowess, which would have been godlike, had it been exerted for your sovereign, and not used as a bait to satisfy an ambition, wild as it is towering, I would expostulate with you; if you are not quite lost to all sober considerations. I would even deign to tell you, that the royal Bruce, in granting the supremacy of Edward, submits, not to the mere wish of a despot, but to the necessity of the times. This is not an era of so great loyalty, that any sove-

reign may venture to contend against such an imperial arm as Edward's. And would you, a boy in years, a novice in politics; and though brave, and till this day successful, would you pretend to prolong a war with the dictator of kingdoms? As a Scot, and in the grace of my royal clemency, I warn you against pursuing so vain and ruinous an enterprise. If you have sense or reason left, endeavour to bend your inflexible spirit to submit to superior power, superior fortune, and superior rights. Can rational discrimination be united with the valour you possess, and you not perceive, the unequal contest between a weak state, deprived of its head, and agitated by intestine commotions; and a mighty nation, conducted by the ablest, and most martial monarch of his age? A man, who is not only determined to maintain his pretensions to Scotland, but is master of every resource, either for protracting war, or pushing it with vigour. If the love of

your country, be indeed your motive for perseverance, your obstinacy tends only to lengthen her misery. But if, as I believe is the case, you carry your views to private aggrandizement; reflect on their probable issue. Should Edward, by a miracle, withdraw his armies; and an intoxicated people elevate their minion to the throne; the lords of Scotland would reject the bold invasion, and with the noble vengeance of insulted greatness, hurl from his height the proud usurper of their rights and mine."

"To usurp any man's rights, and least of all, my King's," replied Wallace, "never came within the range of my thoughts. Though lowly born, Lord Carrick, I am not so base as to require assumption to give me dignity. I saw my country made a garrison of Edward; I beheld the people, outraged in every relation that is dear to man. Who heard their cry?—Where was Bruce?—Where the nobles of Scotland; that none arose to

extinguish her burning villages, to shelter the mother and the child, to rescue purity from violation, to defend the bleeding father and his son?—The shrieks of despair resounded through the land, and none appeared! The hand of violence fell on my own house! the wife of my bosom, was stabbed to the heart, by a magistrate of the fell usurper! I then drew the sword!—I took pity on those who suffered, as I had suffered; I espoused their cause; and never will I forsake it till life forsake me. Therefore, that I became the champion of Scotland, Lord of Carrick, blame not my ambition; but rather the supineness of the nobility, and chiefly yourself:—you, who uniting personal merit to dignity of descent, had deserted the post which both nature and circumstance called upon you to occupy! —Had the Scots, from the time of Baliol's abdication, possessed such a leader as yourself, (for what is the necessity of the times, but the pusillanimity of those who

contend with Edward?) by your valour, and their union, you must have surmounted every difficulty under which we struggle; and have closed the contest with success and honour. If you now start from your guilty delusion, it may not be too late to rescue Scotland from the perils which surround her. Listen then to my voice, prince of the blood of Alexander! forswear the tyrant who has cajoled you to this abandonment of your country, and resolve to be her deliverer. Another blow I yet meditate to strike; that this tyrant of the earth, shall not return with boasts over the country he betrayed; over the patriot band, whom his treachery, and the treason of March and the two Cummins, have brought into this strait. The bravest of the Scots are ready to acknowledge you their lord, to reign as did your forefathers, untrammelled by any foreign yoke. Exchange then a base vassalage, for freedom and a throne! Awake to yourself, noble

Bruce, and behold what it is that I propose! Heaven itself cannot set a more glorious prize before the eyes of virtue or ambition, than to join in one object the acquisition of royalty, with the maintenance of national independence!—Such is my last appeal to you. For myself, as I am well convinced that the real welfare of my country can never subsist with the sacrifice of her liberties, I am determined, as far as in me lies, to prolong, not her miseries, but her integrity, by preserving her from the contamination of slavery. But, should mysterious fate decree her fall, may that power, which knows the vice and horrors which accompany a tyrant's reign, terminate the existence of a people who can no longer preserve their lives but by receiving laws from usurpation."

The truth and gallantry of these sentiments, struck the awakened mind of Bruce with the force of conviction. Another auditor was nigh, who also lost

not a syllable; 'and the flame was conveyed from the breast of one hero to that of the other.'

Lord Carrick secretly repented of all that he had done; but being too proud to acknowledge so much, he briefly answered—"Wallace, your words have made an impression on me that may one day still more brighten the glory of your fame. Be silent respecting this conference:—be faithful to the principles you have declared, and ere long you shall hear royally of Bruce." As he spoke he turned abruptly away, and was lost amongst the trees.([d])

Wallace stood for some minutes musing on what had passed, when, hearing a footstep behind him, he turned round, and beheld approaching him, a young and ethereal form, habited in a white hacqueton wrought with gold, with golden sandals on his feet, and a helmet of the same costly metal on his head, crested with white feathers. The moment the eyes of

Wallace fell on him, the stranger hastened forward and threw himself on one knee before him, with so noble a grace, that the chief was lost in wonder what this beautiful apparition could mean. The youth, after an agitated pause, bowing his head, exclaimed, "Pardon this intrusion, bravest of men! I come to offer to you my heart, my life! To wash out, by your side, in the blood of the enemies of Scotland, the stigma which now dishonours the name of Bruce!" "And who are you, noble youth?" cried Wallace, raising him from the ground. "Surely my prayers are at last answered; and I hear these sentiments from one of Alexander's race!"

"I am indeed of his blood;" replied he; "and it must now be my study to prove my descent, by deeds worthy of my ancestor. I am Robert Bruce, the eldest son of the Earl of Carrick and Annandale. My father, grieving over the slaughter that his valiant arm has made of

his own people, (although till you taught him otherwise, he believed that they fought to maintain the usurpation of an ambitious subject;) walked out in melancholy. I followed at a distance; and I heard, unseen, all that passed between you and him. He has retired to his tent: and, unknown to him, I hastened across the Carron to avow my loyalty to virtue; to declare my determination to live for Scotland, or to die for her; and to follow the arms of Sir William Wallace, till he plants my father in the throne of his ancestors."

"I take you at your word, brave prince!" replied the Regent; "and this night shall give you an opportunity to redeem to Scotland, what your father's sword has this day wrested from her. What I mean to do, must be effected in the course of a few hours. That done, it will be prudent for you to return to the Carrick camp, and there take the most effectual means to persuade your father,

to throw himself at once into the arms of Scotland. The whole nation will then rally round their King; and as his weapon of war, I shall rejoice to fulfil the commission with which God has intrusted me!" He then briefly unfolded to the eagerly-listening Bruce, (whose aspiring spirit, inflamed by the fervour of youth, and winged by natural courage, saw the glory alone of the enterprise,) an attack which he meant immediately to make on the camp of Edward, while his victorious troops slept in fancied security.

He had sent Sir John Graham to Stirling to call out its garrison; Ker he had dispatched on a similar errand to Dumbarton; and expecting that by this time, some of the troops would be arrived on the southern extremity of the Carse, he threw his plaid over the prince's splendid garb, to conceal him from notice; then returning to his men, who lay on the northern bank of the river, he ordered one of the young soldiers to give him his

armour, as he had a use for it, and himself retire to repose in the adjoining village. The brave Scot, not being aware that his general meditated another attack, cheerfully acquiesced; and Wallace retiring amongst the trees with his royal companion, Bruce soon covered his gay hacqueton with this rough mail; and placing the Scottish bonnet on his head, put a large stone into his golden helmet, and sunk it in the waters of the Carron. Being thus completely armed like one of the commonest soldiers in the ranks, (and such disguise was necessary,) Wallace put the trusty claymore of his country into his hand; and clasping him with a hero's warmth to his heart—" Now it is," cried he, " that William Wallace lives anew, since he has seen this hour!"

On re-emerging from the wood, they met Sir John Graham, who had just arrived with five hundred fugitives from Lord Bute's slaughtered division, whom he had collected on the Carse. He in-

formed his friend, that the Earl of Mar was within half a mile of the Carron, with three thousand men; and that he would soon be joined by the garrison from Dumbarton, and other reinforcements, to a similar amount. While Graham yet spoke, a squadron of armed men approached from the Forth side; and Wallace, advancing towards them, beheld the bishop of Dunkeld, in his sacerdotal robes, at their head, with a corslet on his breast; and instead of his crosier, he carried a drawn sword;([e])—"We come to you, champion of Scotland," cried the prelate, "with the prayers and the arms of the church. The sword of the Levites of old, smote the enemies of Israel: and in the same faith, that the God of Justice will go before us this night, we come to fight for Scotland's liberties."

His followers were the younger brethren of the monastery of Cambus-Kenneth, and of other neighbouring convents; altoge-

ther making a stout, and well-appointed legion.

"With this handful," cried Wallace, "Heaven-directed, we shall yet strike our Goliah on the forehead!"

Lord Mar and Lord Lennox now came up: and Wallace, marshalling his train, found that he had nearly ten thousand men. He gave to each leader, his plan of attack: and having placed Bruce with Graham in the van; before he took his station at its head, he retired to the ruins near Dunipacis,(f) to visit the mourning solitude of Murray. He found the pious youth sitting silent and motionless by the side of his dead parent: Wallace, without arousing the violence of grief, by any reference to the sight before him, briefly related his project. Lord Andrew started on his feet; "I will share the dangers of this night! I shall find comfort, in again meeting the foe that has thus bereaved me. This dark mantle," cried he, turn-

ing towards the breathless corse, and throwing his plaid over it, "will shroud thy hallowed remains till I return.—I go where thou wouldst direct me.—Oh, my father!" exclaimed he, in a burst of grief; "the trumpet shall sound, and thou wilt not hear!—But I go to take vengeance for thy blood!"—So saying, he sprung from the place; and accompanying Wallace to the plain, took his station in the silent but swiftly moving army.

## CHAP. II.

THE troops of King Edward lay overpowered with wine. Elated with victory, they had drunk largely, the royal pavilion setting them the example; for though Edward was temperate, yet, to flatter his recovered friends, the inordinate Buchan

and Soulis, he had allowed a greater excess that night, than he was accustomed to sanction. The banquet over, every knight retired to his tent, every soldier to his pallet, and a deep sleep lay upon every man. The King himself, whose many thoughts had long kept waking, now fell into a slumber.

Guards had been placed around the camp, more from military ceremony than an idea of their necessity. The strength of Wallace, they believed broken, and that they should have nothing to do next morning, but to chase him into Stirling, and take him there. But the spirit of the Regent was not so easily subdued: he ever thought it shameful to despair, while it was possible to succeed. And now leading his determined followers through the lower grounds of Cumbernauld; he detached half his force under Mar, to take the Southron camp in the rear, while he should attack the front, and pierce his way to the royal tent

With soundless caution the battalion of Mar, wound round the banks of the Forth, to reach the point of its destination: and Wallace, proceeding with as noiseless a step, gained the hill which overlooked his sleeping enemies. Each of his men in front, shrouded by a branch, which in his march by Tor wood he had torn from the trees, now stood still.—Without this precaution, had any eye looked from the Southron line, they must have been perceived; but now, should a hundred gaze on them, their figures were so blended with the adjoining thickets, that their appearance might easily be mistaken. As the moon sunk in the horizon, they stole gently down the hill; and scarcely drawing breath, were within a few paces of the first out-post—when, one of the sentinels starting from his reclining position, suddenly exclaimed, "What is that?" "Only the wind amongst the trees;" returned his comrade; "I see their branches waving.—

Let me sleep, for Wallace yet lives, and we may have hot work to-morrow." Wallace did live, and the men slept to wake no more, for a Scottish brand was through every Southron heart on the out-post. That done, he threw away his bough, leaped the narrow dyke which lay in front of the camp; and with Bruce and Graham, at the head of a thousand men, cautiously proceeded onward, to reach the pavilion. At the moment when he should blow his bugle, the divisions he had left with Lennox and Murray, and with Lord Mar, were to press forward to the same point.

Still all lay in profound repose;—and the dauntless Scots, guided by the lamps which burnt around the royal quarters, reached the tent. Wallace had already laid his hand upon the curtain which was its entrance, when an armed man with a presented pike, demanded, "Who comes here?" the Regent's answer laid the interrogator's head at his feet: but the voice

had awakened the ever-watchful King; and perceiving his own danger in the fall of the sentinel, he snatched his sword; and calling aloud on his sleeping train, sprang from his couch; and was immediately surrounded by half a score knights, who started on their feet before Wallace could reach the spot. But short would have been their protection; they fell before his arm and that of Graham, and left a vacant place; for Edward had disappeared. Foreseeing, from the prowess of these midnight invaders, the fate of his guards, he had made a timely escape by cutting a passage for himself through the canvass of his tent. Wallace perceived that his prize had eluded his grasp; but hoping at least to drive him from the field, he blew the appointed signal to Mar and Lennox, caught one of the torches from the monarch's table, and setting fire to the adjoining drapery; rushed from its blazing volumes, to meet his brave colleagues amongst the dis-

ordered lines. Graham and his followers, with fire-brands in their hands, threw conflagration into all parts of the camp; and with the fearful war-cries of their country, seemed to assail the terrified enemy from every direction. Men, half dressed, and unarmed, rushed from their tents, upon the pikes of their enemies; thousands fell without striking a blow; and they who were stationed nearest the out-posts, panic-struck, betook themselves to flight, scattering themselves in scared throngs over the amazed plains of Linlithgow.

The King, in vain sought, to rally his men; to remind them of their late victory. The English alone, hearkened to his call: superstition had laid her petrifying hand on all the rest.—The Irish, saw a terrible judgment in this scene; and believed it fallen upon them, for appearing in arms against their sister people: the Welsh, as they descried the warlike bishop of Dunkeld issuing from

the mists of the river, and charging his foaming steed through their flying defiles, could not persuade themselves that Merlin had not arisen, to chastise their obedience to the ravager of their country. Every superstitious, every panic fear, took possession of the half intoxicated, half dreaming wretches; and falling in bloody and unresisting heaps all around, it was rather a slaughter than a battle. Opposition seemed every where abandoned, excepting on the spot still maintained by the King of England and his brave countrymen. The faithless Scots who had followed the Cummins to the field, also stood there, and fought with desperation. Wallace opposed the despair and valour of his adversaries, with the steadiness of his men; and Graham, having seized some of the war-engines, discharged a shower of blazing arrows upon the Southron phalanx.

The camp was now on fire in every direction: and Edward, putting all to the

hazard of one decisive blow, ordered his men, fiercely to charge the assailants; and to make at once to the point, where, by the light of the flaming tents, he could perceive the waving plumes of Wallace. With his ponderous mace, held terribly in the air, the King himself bore down to the shock; and breaking through the intervening combatants, assaulted the chief. The might of ten thousand souls, seemed then to be in the arm of the Regent of Scotland. The puissant Edward, wondered at himself, as he shrank from before his strokes; as he shuddered, at the heroic fierceness of a countenance, which seemed more than mortal. Was it indeed the Scottish chieftain? or some armed angel, descended to fight the battles of the oppressed?—Edward trembled: his mace was struck from his hand;—but immediately a glittering falchion supplied its place; and with recovering presence of mind, and redoubled determination, he renewed the combat.

At this instant, the young Bruce, (who, in his humble armour, might have been passed by, as an enemy to be left to meaner swords,) checking the onward speed of March, pierced him at once through the heart: "Die, thou disgrace to the name of Scot," cried he, "and with thy blood expunge my stains!" His sword now laid hundreds at his feet:—and while the tempest of death blew around, the groans of the dying, the shrieks of the wounded, and the outcries of those who were perishing in the flames, raised such distraction in the King's ranks, and so great a fear in the minds of the Cummin clan, that, breaking from the royal line with yells of dismay, they fled in all directions after their already fugitive allies.

Edward, seeing the Earl of March fall, and finding himself wounded in many places, with a backward step, received the blows of Wallace; but that determined chief, following his advantage, made a

stroke at the King, which threw him astounded into the arms of his followers. At that moment Lincoln raised his arm to strike his dagger into the back of Wallace, but Graham arrested the blow, and sent the young lord a motionless body to the earth. The Southron ranks closed immediately before their insensible monarch, and a contest, more desperate than any which had preceded it, took place. Hosts seemed to fall on both sides; at last the Southrons, (having stood their ground till Edward was carried from farther danger) suddenly wheeling about, fled precipitately towards the east. Wallace pursued them on full charge: and driving them across the lowlands of Linlithgow; learnt from some prisoners whom he took, that the Earl of Carrick was in the Lothians; having retreated thither on the first tidings that the Scots had attacked the English camp.

"Now is your time," said Wallace to Bruce, "to rejoin your father. Bring

him to Scotland, where a free crown awaits him. Your actions of this night, are a pledge to your country of the virtues which will support his throne!"

The young warrior throwing off his rugged hauberk, appeared again as a prince; and embracing the Regent, "A messenger from myself, or from my father," said he, "shall meet you at Stirling: meanwhile, farewel!"

Bruce remounted his horse, and spurring over the banks of the Almond, was soon lost amidst its luxuriant shades.

The pursuit, Wallace still led; and meeting those auxiliaries from the adjoining counties, which his provident orders had prepared to turn out on the first appearance of this martial chase; he poured his troops through Ettrick forest, and drove the flying host of England far into Northumberland:—there checking his triumphant squadrons, he recalled his stragglers; and returned with abated speed into his own country. Halting on

the north bank of the Tweed, he sent to their quarters those bands which belonged to the border castles; and then marched leisurely forward, that his brave soldiers, who had sustained the weight of the battle, might recover their exhausted strength.

At Peebles he was agreeably surprised by the sight of Edwin. Lord Ruthven, though ignorant of the re-commenced hostilities of Edward, had been so impatient to resume his duties, that, as soon as he was able to move, he set off on his return to Perth. On arriving at Hunting tower, he was told of the treachery of March; and that the Regent had beaten the enemy on the banks of the Carron, and was pursuing him into his own dominions. Ruthven was inadequate to the exertion of following the successful troops; but Edwin, rejoicing at this new victory, would not be detained; and crossing the Forth into Mid-Lothian, sped his eager way, until the happy moment

that brought him again to the side of his first and dearest friend.

As they continued their route together, Edwin inquired the events of the past time; and heard them related with wonder, horror, and gratitude. Grateful for the preservation of Wallace, grateful for the rescue of his country from the menaced destruction; for some time he could only clasp his friend's hand with strong emotion to his heart. The death of his uncle Bothwell made that heart tremble within him, at the thought of how much severer might have been his deprivation:—at last extricating his powers of speech from the spell of contradictory feelings which enchained them, he said—"But if my uncle Mar, and our brave friend Graham, were in the last conflict; where are they, that I do not see them share your victory?"—"I hope," returned Wallace, "that we shall rejoin them in safety at Stirling! Our troops parted in the pursuit; and after

having sent back the lowland chieftains, you see I have none with me now but my own particular followers, and our dear Murray."

The Regent's expectations that he should soon fall in with some of the chasing squadrons, were the next morning gratified. Crossing the Bathgate hills, he met the returning battalions of Lennox with Lord Mar's, and also Sir John Graham's. Lord Lennox was thanked by Wallace for his good services; and immediately dispatched to re-occupy his station in Dumbarton. But the captains of Mar and of Graham, could give no other account of their leaders, than that they last saw them fighting valiantly in the Southron camp; and had since supposed, that during the pursuit, they must have joined the Regent's squadron. A cold dew fell over the limbs of Wallace at these tidings: he looked on Murray and on Edwin. The expression of the former's face told him what were his fears; but

Edwin, ever sanguine, strove to encourage the hope that all might yet be well. "They may not have yet returned from the pursuit; or they may have arrived, and gone into Stirling!"

But these comfortings were soon dispelled by the appearance of Lord Ruthven, who, (having been apprized of the Regent's approach) came forth to meet him. The pleasure of seeing the earl so far recovered as to have been enabled to leave Hunting tower, was checked by the first glance of his face, on which was deeply characterized some tale of grief. Edwin thought that it was the recent disasters of Scotland he mourned, and with a cheering voice he exclaimed, "Courage, my father! our Regent again comes a conqueror! Edward has once more re-crossed the plains of Northumberland!"

"Thanks be to God, for that!" replied Ruthven; "but, what has not these last conflicts cost our country? Lord Mar

is wounded unto death; and lies in a chamber, next to the yet unburied corses of Lord Bute and the dauntless Graham."—Wallace turned deadly pale, a mist passed over his eyes, and staggering, he breathlessly supported himself on the arm of Edwin. Murray looked on him; but all was still in his heart: his own beloved father had fallen; and in that stroke, fate seemed to have emptied all her quiver.

"Lead me to the spot!" cried Wallace; "shew me where my friends lie: let me hear the last prayer for Scotland, from the lips of the bravest of her veterans!"

Ruthven turned the head of his horse; and as he rode along, he informed the Regent, that Edwin had not left Hunting tower for the Forth half an hour, when an express arrived there from Falkirk. By it he learnt, that as soon as the inhabitants of Stirling saw the fire of the Southron camp, they had hastened thi-

ther to enjoy the spectacle. Some, bolder than the rest, entered its deserted confines, (for the retreating squadrons were then flying over the plain) and amidst the dreadful slaughter near the royal tent, a man thought he distinguished groans. Whether friend or foe, he stooped to render assistance to the sufferer, and soon found it to be Lord Mar. The Earl begged to be carried to some shelter, that he might see his wife and daughter before he died. The people drew him out from under his horse and many a mangled corse; and wrapping him in their plaids, conveyed him to Falkirk, as the nearest place, and lodged him with the friars in the convent. "A messenger was instantly dispatched to me;" continued Ruthven; "and indifferent to all personal considerations, when so summoned, I set out immediately. I saw my dying brother-in-law. At his request, that others might not longer suffer, what he had endured under the pressure of the slain, the

field had been sought for the wounded. Many were conveyed into the neighbouring houses; while the dead were consigned to the earth. Deep has been dug the graves of mingled Scot, and English, on the banks of the Carron! Many of our fallen nobles, amongst whom was the princely Badenoch, have been conveyed to the cemetery of their ancestors; others are entombed in the church of Falkirk: but the bodies of Sir John Graham, and my brother Bothwell," said he, in a lower tone, "I have retained till you return."—"You have done right," replied Wallace; and spurring forward, he saw not the ground he trod, till ascending the hill of Falkirk, the venerable walls of its monastery presented themselves to his view. He threw himself off his horse, and entered, preceded by Lord Ruthven.

He stopped before the cell which contained the dying chief, and desired the abbot to apprize the Earl of his ar-

rival. The sound of that voice, whose heart-consoling tones could be matched by none on earth, penetrated to the ear of his almost insensible friend. Mar started from his pillow; and Wallace, through the half open door, heard him say—" Let him come in, Joanna! All my mortal hopes now hang on him."

Wallace instantly stepped forward, and beheld the veteran stretched on a couch, the image of that death to which he was so rapidly approaching. He hastened towards him; and the dying man, who found friendship, and the hopes which still agitated him, give to his debilitated nerves a momentary revival, stretched forth his arms, and exclaimed,—" Come to me Wallace, my son: the only hope of Scotland, the only human trust of this anxious paternal heart!"

Wallace threw himself on his knees beside him, and taking his hand, pressed it in speechless anguish to his lips: every present grief was then weighing on his

soul, and denied him the power of utterance. Lady Mar sat by the pillow of her husband; but she bore no marks of the sorrow which convulsed the frame of Wallace. She looked serious; but her cheek wore its freshest bloom. She spoke not; and the veteran allowed the tears of enfeebled nature to fall on the bent head of his friend. "Mourn not for me!" cried he, "nor think that these are regretful drops. I have died as I have wished, in the field for Scotland. Time must have soon laid my grey hairs ignobly in the grave; and to enter it thus, covered with honourable wounds, is glory;—and has long been my prayer! But, dearest, most unwearied of friends! Still the tears of mortality will flow, for I leave my children fatherless in this faithless world—And my Helen! Oh, Wallace, the angel who exposed her precious self through the dangers of that midnight walk, to save Scotland, her father, and his friend, is lost to us! Joanna, tell

the rest," said he gasping, "for I cannot."

Wallace turned to Lady Mar with an inquiring look of such wild horror, that she found her tongue cleave to the roof of her mouth, and her complexion faded into the pallidness of his. "Surely," exclaimed he, "there is not to be a wreck of all that is estimable on earth? The Lady Helen is not dead?"—"No;" said the Earl, "but—" he could proceed no farther, and Lady Mar forced herself to speak.—"She has fallen into the hands of the enemy. My lord, on being brought to this place, sent for myself and Lady Helen; we obeyed his summons; but in passing by Dunipacis, a squadron issued from behind the mound, and putting our attendants to flight, seized Helen. I escaped hither. The reason of this attack was explained afterwards by one of the Southrons, who having been wounded by our escort, was taken, and brought to Falkirk. He said, that Lord Aymer de

Valence having been sent by his beset monarch to call Lord Carrick to his assistance, found the Bruce's camp deserted; but by accident learning that Lady Helen was to be brought to Falkirk, he stationed himself behind Dunipacis, and springing out as soon as our cavalcade was in view, seized her. She obtained, the rest were allowed to escape. And, it seems, by what Lord Mar has lately told me, that De Valence loved Helen; hence I cannot doubt that he will have sufficient honour, not to insult the fame of her family, but to make her his wife."

"God forbid!" ejaculated Mar, holding up his trembling hands; "God forbid, that my blood should ever mingle with that of any one of the people, who have wrought such woe to Scotland! Swear to me, valiant Wallace, by the virtues of her virgin heart, by your own immaculate honour, that you will rescue my Helen from the power of this Southron lord!"

"So help me Heaven!" answered Wal-

lace, looking stedfastly upwards. A groan burst from the lips of Lady Mar, and her head sunk on the side of the couch.—" What?—Who is that?" exclaimed Mar, raising his head, alarmed, from his pillow. " Believe it your country, Donald!" replied she; " to what, do you bind its only defender? Are you not throwing him into the very centre of his enemies, by making him swear to rescue Helen? Think you, that De Valence will not foresee a pursuit, and take her into the heart of England? And thither must our Regent follow him! —Oh, my lord, retract your demand! Release Sir William Wallace from a vow that will destroy him!"—" Wallace!" cried the now soul-struck Earl, " What have I done? Has a father's anxiety asked of you amiss? If so, pardon me! —But if my daughter also, must perish for Scotland, take her, O God! uncontaminated, and let us meet in Heaven!—Wallace, I dare not accept your vow."

"But I will fulfil it:" cried he. "Let thy paternal heart rest in peace; and by Jesu's help, Lady Helen shall again be in her own country as free from Southron taint, as she is from all mortal sins! De Valence dare not approach her heavenly innocence with violence; and her Scottish heart will never consent to give him a lawful claim to her precious self. Edward's legions are far beyond the borders; but yet I will reach him:—for the demands of the morning at Falkirk, are now to be answered in the halls of Stirling."

Lord Ruthven, followed by Edwin and Murray, entered the room.—The two nephews, held each a hand of their dying uncle in theirs, when Lady Ruthven, who, exhausted with fatigue and anxiety, had retired about an hour before, appeared at the door of the apartment. She had been informed of the arrival of the Regent with her son; and now hastened to give them a sorrowful wel-

come.—" Ah, my lord!" cried she, as Wallace pressed her matron cheek to his; " this is not as your triumphs are wont to be greeted! You are still a conqueror; and yet death, dreadful death, lies all around us! And our Helen too!"

" Shall be restored to you;" returned he. " What is yet left for me to do, shall be done; and then—" he paused, and added, " The time is not far distant, Lady Ruthven, when we shall all meet in the realms to which so many of our dearest friends have hastened."

Edwin, with swimming eyes, drew towards his master.—My uncle would sleep," said he, " he is exhausted, and will recal us when he awakes from rest." The eyes of the veteran were at that moment closed with heavy slumber. And Lady Ruthven remaining with the Countess, to watch by him, Wallace led the way; and Ruthven, with the two young men, followed him from the apartment.

Lord Loch-awe, with the bishop of

Dunkeld, and other chieftains, lay in different chambers, pierced with many wounds; but none so grievous as those of Lord Mar.—Wallace visited them all. And having gone through the numerous places in the neighbourhood, which were filled with his wounded men, at the glooming of evening he returned to Falkirk. Edwin, he sent forward to inquire after the repose of his uncle; and on re-entering the monastery himself, he requested the abbot to conduct him to the apartment where lay the remains of Sir John Graham. The father obeyed; and leading him along a dark passage, opened a door, and discovered the slain hero lying on a bier. Two monks sat at his head, with tapers in their hands. Wallace, on entering, waved them to withdraw; they set down the lights, and obeyed.

He stood for some time with clasped hands, looking intently on the body, as it lay extended before him. "Graham!

Graham!" cried he at last, in a voice of unutterable grief, "dost thou not rise at thy general's voice?—Oh! is this to be the tidings I am to send to the brave father who intrusted to me his son? Lost in the prime of youth, in the opening of thy renown, is it thus that all which is good is to be martyrized by the enemies of Scotland?" He sunk gradually on his knees beside him.—"And shall I not look once more on that face," said he, "which ever turned towards mine with looks of faith and love?" The shroud was drawn down by his hand. He started on his feet at the sight. The changing touch of death had altered every feature; had deepened the paleness of the bloodless corse, into an ashy hue. "Where is the countenance of my friend!" cried he; "where the spirit, which once moved in beauty, and animating light, over this face?—Gone; and all I see before me is a mass of moulded clay. Graham! Graham!" cried he, looking upwards,

"thou art not here. No more can I recognise my friend in this deserted habitation of thy soul. Thine own proper self, thine immortal spirit, is ascended up above; and there my fond remembrance shall ever seek thee!" Again he knelt; but it was in devotion; a devotion, which drew the sting from death; and opened to his view, the victory of the Lord of Life over the king of terrors.

Edwin having learnt from his father that Lord Mar still slept, and being told by the abbot where the Regent was, followed him to the consecrated chamber. On entering, he perceived him kneeling by the body of his friend. Edwin drew near.—He loved the brave Graham, and he almost adored Wallace. The scene, therefore, smote upon his heart.—He dropped down by the side of the Regent; and throwing his arms around his neck, in a convulsive voice exclaimed, "Our friend is gone—but I yet live,—and only in your smiles, my friend and

brother!" Wallace strained him to his breast: he was silent for some minutes; and then said, "To every dispensation of God I am resigned, my Edwin. While I bow to this stroke, I acknowledge the blessing I still hold in you and Murray. But, did we not feel these visitations from our Maker, they would not be decreed us. To behold the dead, is the penalty of man for sin; for more pain is it to witness and to occasion death, than for ourselves to die. It is also a lesson which God teaches his sons: and in the moment that he shews us death, he convinces us of immortality. Look on that face, Edwin!" said he, turning his eyes on the breathless clay. His youthful auditor, awe-struck, and with the tears which were flowing from his eyes, checked by the solemnity of this address, looked as he directed him; "Doth not that inanimate mould of earth, testify, that nothing less than an immortal spirit, could have lit up its

marble substance, to the life and godlike actions we have seen it perform?" Edwin shuddered; and Wallace, letting the shroud fall over the face, said, "Never more will I look at it; for it no longer wears the characters of my friend; they are pictured on my soul. And himself, my Edwin, still effulgent in beauty, and glowing with life, looks down on us from heaven!" He rose as he spoke, and opening the door, the monks re-entered; and placing themselves at the head of the bier, chanted the vesper requiem. When it was ended, Wallace kissed the crucifix they laid on his friend's breast, and left the cell.

## CHAP. III.

NO eye closed that night in the monastery of Falkirk. The Earl of Mar, who awaked about the twelfth hour, sent to call Lord Ruthven, Sir William Wallace, and his nephews, to attend him. As they approached, the priests, who had just anointed his dying head with the sacred unction, drew back. The Countess and Lady Ruthven supported his pillow. He smiled as he heard the advancing steps of those so dear to him. "I send for you," said he, "to give you the blessing of a true Scot and a christian! May all who are here in thy blessed presence, Father of Righteousness," cried he, looking up with a supernatural brightness in his eye; "die as I do, rather than live to see Scotland enslaved! But rather may they

live under that liberty, perpetuated, which Wallace has again given to his country: peaceful will then be their last moments on earth, and full of joy their entrance into heaven!" His eyes closed as the concluding word died upon his tongue. Lady Ruthven looked intently on him: she bent her face to his, but he breathed no more; and with a feeble cry, she fell back in a swoon.

The soul of the veteran Earl was indeed fled. The Countess was taken shrieking out of the apartment: but Wallace, Edwin, and Murray, remained, kneeling around the corse. Anthems for the departed, were raised over the body; and the priests throwing over it a cloud of incense, the mourners withdrew, and separated to their chambers.

By day-break next morning, Wallace, who had never slept, met Murray by appointment in the cloisters. The remains of his beloved father, had been discovered at Dunipacis, by the detachment sent out

by the dying Mar, to bring in the wounded; and being carried to the convent, Murray now prepared to take them to Bothwell castle, there to be interred in the cemetery of his ancestors. Wallace, who had approved his design, entered with him into the solitary court-yard where the war-carriage stood which was to convey the deceased earl to Clydesdale. Four soldiers of his clan brought the corse of their lord from his cell, and laid him on his martial bier. His bed was the sweet hether of Falkirk, spread by the hands of his son. As Wallace laid the venerable chieftain's sword and helmet on his bier, he covered the whole with a flag which he tore from the standard of England, seized in the last victory. "None other shroud is worthy of thy virtues!" cried he, "dying for Scotland, thus let the memorial of her glory, be the witness of thine!" "Oh! my friend," answered Murray, looking on him with a smile, which beamed the fairer, shining through sorrow,

"thy gracious spirit can divest even death of its gloom!—My father yet lives in his fame!"

The solemn procession, with Murray at its head, departed towards the vallies of Clydesdale; and Wallace returned to his chamber. Two hours before noon, he was summoned to the chapel: the Earl of Bute, and his dearer friend, were to be laid in their tombs. With a spirit that did not murmur, he saw the earth closed over both graves: but at Graham's he lingered; and when the funeral stone shut even the sod that covered him from his eyes,—with his sword's point he drew on the surface these memorable words:

* "Mente manuque potens, et Walli fidus Achates,
Conditus hic Gramus, bello interfectus ab Anglis." ([g])

While he yet leaned on the stone, which

* These lines may be translated thus,—

Here lies
The powerful in mind and body, the faithful friend of Wallace, Graham, slain in battle by the English.

gently gave way to the registering pen of friendship; a monk approached him, attended by a shepherd boy. Wallace looked up, at the sound of steps: "This young man," said the father, "brings dispatches to the Lord Regent." Wallace rose; and the youth presented his packet.—Withdrawing to a little distance, he broke the seal, and read to this effect:

"My father and myself are in the castle of Durham, and both under an arrest. We are to remain so, till our arrival in London renders its sovereign in opinion more secure: then, you shall hear from me again. Meanwhile, be on your guard: the gold of Edward has found its way into the heart of your councils. Beware of them who, with patriotism in their mouths, are purchased to betray you and their country into the hands of your enemy! Truest, noblest, best of Scots, farewel!—I must not write more explicitly."

"P. S.—The messenger who takes this, is a simple border shepherd: he knows

not whence comes the packet; hence, he can bring me no answer."

Wallace closed the letter; and putting gold into the shepherd's hand, left the chapel. Ruthven met him in the cloisters. He was just returned from Stirling, where he had been to inform the lords there, of the arrival of the Regent. "When I summoned them to the council-hall," continued he, "and informed them, that you had not only defeated Edward on the Carron, but had driven him over the borders; and so had gained a double victory, over a foreign usurper and domestic traitors; instead of the usual gratulations at such tidings, a low whisper murmured through the hall; and the young Badenoch rising from his seat, gave utterance to so many invectives against the assassin of his father, as he chose to call you, that I should deem it treason to your sacred person, even to repeat them. Suffice it to say, that out of five hundred chieftains who were present, not one of those para-

sites who used to fawn on you a week ago, and make the love of honest men seem doubtful, now breathes one word for Sir William Wallace. But this ingratitude, vile as it is, I bore with patience, till Badenoch, growing in insolency, declared, that late last night dispatches arrived from the King of France to the Regent; and that he, (assuming to himself, in right of his birth, that dignity,) had put Sir Alexander Ramsay, who brought them, under confinement in the keep, for having dared to dispute his authority to withhold them from your view."

"I will release Ramsay;" replied Wallace; "and meet these violent men. But it must be alone, my dear lord;" continued he; "you, and my chieftains, may wait my return at the city gates; but the sword of Edward, if need be, shall defend me against his gold."—As he spoke he laid his hand on the jewelled weapon which hung at his side, and which he had

wrested from that monarch in the last conflict.

Aware that this treason, aimed at him, would strike his country, unless timely warded off, he took his resolution; and requesting Ruthven, not to communicate to any one what had passed, he mounted his horse, and struck into the road to Stirling. He took the plume from his crest, and closing his visor, envelopped himself in his plaid, that, as he went along, the people might not know him. But at the door of the keep, casting away his cloak, and unclasping his helmet, he entered the council-hall openly and abruptly. By an instantaneous impulse of respect, which even the base pay to virtue, almost every man arose at his appearance. He bowed to the assembly; and walked with a composed, but severe air up to his station, as Regent, at the head of the room. Young Badenoch stood there; and as Wallace approached, he fiercely grasped his sword;

"Proud upstart!" cried he; "betrayer of my father! set a foot further towards this chair, and the chastisement of every arm in this council shall fall on you for your presumption."

"It is not in the arms of thousands, to put me from my right," replied Wallace, calmly putting forth his hand, and drawing the Regent's chair towards him.

"Will ye bear this?" cried Badenoch, stamping with his foot, and plucking forth his sword; "is the man to exist, who thus braves the assembled lords of Scotland?" As he spoke, he made a desperate lunge at the Regent's breast: Wallace, caught the blade in his hand, and wrenching it from his intemperate adversary, broke it into shivers, and cast the pieces at his feet; then turning resolutely towards the chieftains, who stood appalled looking on each other, he said, "I, your duly elected Regent, left you only a few days ago, to repel the enemy whom the treason of Lord March would have intro-

duced to these very walls. Many brave chieftains followed me: and more, whom I see now, loaded me, as I passed from the gates, with benedictions. Portentous was the day of Falkirk to Scotland. Then did the mighty fall, and the heads of coun-sel perish;—and treason was the parricide! The late Lord Badenoch stood his ground like a true Scot; but Athol and Buchan deserted to Edward.—"Young chieftain," said he, addressing the furious Badenoch, who, gnashing his teeth in impotent rage, stood listening to the inflaming whispers of Macdougal of Lorn; "from their trea-chery date the fate of your brave father, and the whole of our grievous loss of that day. But the wide destruction has been avenged: more than chief for chief, have perished in the Southron ranks; and thou-sands of the meaner sort, now swell the banks of Carron. Edward himself, fell wounded by my arm; and fled with his flying squadrons, far over the wastes of Northumberland. Thus have I returned

to you, with my duties achieved, in a manner worthy of your Regent!—What, then, means the arrest of my embassador? what this silence, when the representative of your power, is insulted to your face?"

"They mean," cried Badenoch, "that my words, are the utterance of their sentiments."—"They mean," cried Lorn, "that the prowess of the haughty boaster, whom their intoxicated gratitude raised from the dust; shall not avail him, against the indignation of a nation, over which he dares to arrogate a right."

"Mean they what they will;" returned Wallace; "they cannot dispossess me of the rights, with which the assembled kingdom of Scotland invested me on the plains of Stirling.—And again I demand, by what authority do you, and they, presume to imprison my officer; and withhold from me, the papers sent by King Philip to the Regent of Scotland?"

"By an authority that we will maintain;" replied Badenoch; "by the right

of my royal blood; and by the sword of every brave Scot who spurns at the name of William Wallace!"—"And as a proof that we speak not more than we act," cried Lorn, making a sign to the boldest chieftains; "you are our prisoner!" Many weapons were instantly unsheathed, and their bearers hurrying to the side of Badenoch and Lorn, attempted to lay hands on Wallace; but he, drawing the broad sword of Edward, with a sweep of his valiant arm, which made the glittering blade seem a brand of fire, he set his back against the wall, and exclaimed—"He that first makes a stroke at me, shall find his death on this Southron steel!—This sword, I made the puissant arm of the usurper yield to me; and this sword shall defend the Regent of Scotland, against his ungrateful countrymen!"

The chieftains who pressed on him, recoiled at these words; but their leaders, Badenoch and Lorn, waved them forward with vehement exhortations:—"Desist,

young men!" continued he; "and provoke me not beyond my bearing. In one moment, with a single blast of my bugle, I could surround this building with a band of warriors, who, at the first sight of their chief being thus assaulted, would lay this chamber deep in blood.—Let me pass, or abide the consequence!"

"Through my breast, then;" exclaimed Badenoch; "for with my consent, you pass not here but on your bier. What is in the arm of a single man," cried he to the lords, "that ye cannot fall on him at once, and cut him down."

"I would not hurt the son of the virtuous Badenoch;" returned Wallace; "but his life be on your heads," said he, turning to the chieftains, "if one of you point a sword to impede my passage." ——"And wilt thou dare it? usurper of my power and honours!" cried Badenoch: "Lorn, stand by your friend:—all here, who are true to the Cummin and Macdougal, hem in the tyrant."

Many a traitor hand now drew forth its dagger; and the intemperate Badenoch, drunk with choler and mad ambition, made another violent plunge at Wallace, with a sword, he had snatched from one of his accomplices: but its metal, less approved than that his adversary held, flew in splinters on the guard stroke of the Regent, and left Badenoch at his mercy. "Defend me, chieftains, or I am slain!" cried he. But Wallace did not let his hand follow its advantage: with the dignity of conscious desert he turned from the vanquished; and casting the enraged Lorn from him, who had thrown himself in his way; he exclaimed—"That arm will wither, which dares to point its steel at me."—The pressing crowd, struck in astonishment, parted before him, as they would have done in the path of a thunderbolt, and, unimpeded, he passed to the door.

That their Regent had entered the keep, was soon rumoured through the

city; and when he appeared from the gate, he was hailed by the acclamations of the people. Again he found his empire in the hearts of the lowly: they whom he had restored to their cottages, knelt to him in the streets, and called for blessings on his name; while they—Oh! blasting touch of envy!—whom he had restored to castles, and elevated from a state of vassalage to the power of princes, they raised against him that very power, to lay him in the dust.

Now it was, that when surrounded by the grateful citizens of Stirling, (whom it would have been as easy for him to have inflamed to the massacre of Badenoch and his council, as to have lifted his bugle to his lips,)—that he blew the summons for his chieftains. Every man in the keep now flew to arms, expecting that Wallace was returning upon them with the host he threatened. In a few minutes the Lord Ruthven, with his brave followers, entered the inner ballium gate. Wallace smiled

proudly as they drew near.—"My lords," said he, "you come to witness the last act of my delegated power! Sir Alexander Scrymgeour, enter into that hall, which was once the seat of council, and tell the violent men who fill it, that, for the sake of the peace of Scotland, which I value more than my life, I allow them to stand unpunished of their offence against me. But the outrage they have committed on the freedom of one of her bravest sons, I will not pardon, unless he be immediately set at liberty: let them deliver to you Sir Alexander Ramsay, and then I permit them to hear my final decision. If they refuse obedience, they are all my prisoners; and but for my pity on their blindness, should perish by the laws."

Scrymgeour, eager to open the prison doors of his friend Ramsay, and little suspecting to what he was calling the insurgents, hastened to obey. Lorn and Badenoch gave him a very rough recep-

tion; and uttered such a rebellious defiance of the Regent and his power, that the brave standard-bearer lost all patience, and denounced the immediate deaths of the whole refractory assembly. "The court-yard," cried he, "is armed with thousands of the Regent's followers; his foot, therefore, is on your necks: obey, or this will be a more grievous day for Scotland, than even that of Falkirk; for the castle of Stirling, will run with Scottish blood!" Badenoch became more enraged at this menace; and Scrymgeour, seeing no chance of prevailing by argument, sent a messenger, privately, to tell the result to Wallace. The Regent immediately placed himself at the head of twenty men, and re-entering the keep, made direct to the warder; and ordering him, on his allegiance to the laws, to deliver Sir Alexander Ramsay into his hands; he was obeyed; and returned, with his recovered chieftain, to the platform. Scrymgeour, being apprized that the knight was

at liberty, turned to Badenoch, with whom he was still contending in furious argument; and demanded, "Will you, or will you not, attend me to the Regent? He of you all," added he, addressing the chieftains, "who in this simple duty disobeys, shall receive from him the severer doom."

Badenoch and Lorn affected to deride this menace, and replied, that they would not for an empire, do the usurper the homage of a moment's voluntary attention; but if any of their followers chose to view the mockery, they were at liberty. A very few, and those of the least turbulent spirits, ventured forth: they began to fear, that they had embarked in a desperate cause; and by their present acquiescence, were willing to deprecate the wrath of Wallace, while sure of not exciting the resentment of Badenoch.

When Wallace looked around him; and saw the plain before the keep, to the ballium wall, filled with armed men and

citizens, he mounted an elevated piece of ground which rose a little to the left; and waving his hand, in token that he intended to speak, a profound silence took place of the buzz of admiration and gratitude. He then addressed the people, "Brother soldiers! Friends! And am I so to distinguish Scots? Enemies!" At this word, a loud cry of "Perish all, who are the enemies of our glorious Regent!" shook the foundation of the keep to its centre.

Badenoch, believing that the few of his partizans, who had ventured out, were falling under the vengeance of Wallace, with a brandished weapon, and followed by the rest, sallied towards the door: but there he stopped, for he saw his friends standing unmolested.

Wallace proceeded, and with calm dignity, narrated the hatred that was now poured upon him, by a large part of that nobility, which had been so eager to invest him with the dignity he then held;

—"Though they have broken their oaths," cried he, "I have fulfilled mine! They vowed to me, all lawful obedience: I swore to free Scotland or to die. Every castle in this kingdom is restored to its ancient lord: every fortress is filled with a native garrison: the sea is covered with our ships: and the kingdom, one in itself, sits secure behind her well-defended bulwarks. Such have I, through the strength of the Almighty arm, made Scotland!—Beloved by a grateful people, I could wield half her power to the destruction of the rest, but I would not pluck one stone out of the building I have raised. To-day I deliver up my commission, since its design is accomplished. I resign the regency." As he spoke, he took off his helmet, and stood uncovered before the people.

"No, no!" resounded from every lip; "we will acknowledge no other power, we will obey no other leader!"

Wallace expressed his sense of their

attachment; but repeating to them, that he had fulfilled the end of his office, by setting them free; he explained, that his retaining it was no longer necessary.—"Should I remain your Regent," continued he, "the country would be involved in ruinous dissensions. The majority of your nobles, now find a vice in the virtue they once extolled; and seeing its power no longer needful, seek to destroy my upholders with myself. I therefore remove the cause of contention. I quit the regency; and I bequeath your liberty, to the care of your chieftains. But, should it be again in danger, remember, that while life breathes in this heart, the spirit of Wallace will be with you still!"

With these words, he descended the mound; and mounted his horse, amidst the cries and tears of the populace.—They clung to his garments as he rode along; and the women, with their children, throwing themselves on their knees in his path, implored him not to leave

them to the inroads of a ravager: not to abandon them to the tyranny of their own lords; who, unrestrained by a king, or a regent like himself, would soon subvert his good laws, and reign despots over every district in the country. Wallace answered their entreaties with the language of encouragement; but adding, that he was not their prince, to lawfully maintain a disputed power, over the legitimate chieftains of the land; he said, "a rightful sovereign, may yet be yielded to your prayers; and to procure that blessing, daughters of Scotland, night and day invoke the Giver of every good gift."

When Wallace, and his weeping train, separated at the foot of Falkirk hill, he was met by his brave Lanerkers; who, having heard of what had passed in the citadel, advanced to him, with one voice, to declare that they never would fight under any other commander. "Where-ever you are, my faithful friends," returned Wallace, "you shall still obey my

word." This assurance quieted their fears, that he was going to consign them over to the turbulent lords in the castle. When he entered the monastery, the opposition that was made to his resignation of the regency, by the bishop of Dunkeld, Lord Loch-awe, and others, was so vehement, so persuasive; that had not Wallace been steadily principled, not to involve his country in domestic war, he must have yielded, if not to their reasoning, to the affectionate eloquence of their pleading. But shewing the public danger, attendant on his provoking the wild ambition of the Cummins and their clamorous adherents; with arguments, which the sober judgments of his friends saw conclusive, he at last ended the debate, saying, "I have yet to perform my vow to our lamented Mar. I shall seek his daughter; and then, my brave companions, you shall hear of me, and see me again!"

## CHAP. IV.

IT being Lady Ruthven's wish that the remains of her brother should be entombed with his ancestors, preparations were made for the mournful cavalcade to set forth, next morning, towards Braemar castle. The Countess, hoping that Wallace might be induced to accompany them, did not long object to this proposal, which Lady Ruthven enforced with floods of tears. Had any one seen the two, and been called upon to judge by their deportment, of the relationship in which each lady stood to the deceased, he must have decided that the sister was the widow. Lady Mar, at the moment of her husband's death, had felt a shock; but it was not that of sorrow for her loss: she had long looked forward to this event, as

to the seal of her happiness: it was the sight of mortality, that appalled her. The man she doted on, nay, even herself, must one day lie as the object now before her—dead! insensible to all earthly joys or pains! but awake, perhaps fearfully awake, to the judgments of another world!—This conviction caused her shrieks, when she saw Lord Mar expire. But the impression was evanescent. Every obstacle between her and Wallace, she now believed removed. Her husband was dead: Helen was carried away, by a man devotedly enamoured of her; and most probably, was at that time his wife. The spectres of conscience passed from her eyes, she no longer thought of death and judgment; and under a pretence that her feelings could not bear the sight of her husband's bier, she determined to seclude herself in her own chamber for a day or two, till the freshness of Wallace's grief for his friends should have passed away. But when she heard from the in-

dignant Edwin, of the rebellious conduct of the young Lord Badenoch; and that the consequence was, the Regent's abdication of his dignity; her consternation superseded all caution, and rising from her chair, she commanded Edwin to send Wallace to her. "I will soon humble this proud boy!" exclaimed she, "and let him know, that in opposing the elevation of Sir William Wallace, he treads down his own interest. You are beloved by the Regent, Edwin!" cried she, interrupting herself, and turning to him with earnestness, "teach his enthusiastic heart, the true interests of his country! —I am the first woman of the blood of Cummin; and is not that family the most (h) powerful in the kingdom? By the adherence of one branch to Edward, the battle of Falkirk was lost; by the rebellion of another, the Regent of Scotland is obliged to relinquish that dignity! It is in my power, at any moment, to move the whole race to my will: and if

Wallace would mingle his blood with theirs, would espouse me, (an overture which the love I bear my country impels me to make,) every nerve would then be strained to promote the elevation of their nearest kinswoman—Wallace would reign in Scotland, and the whole land lie at peace."

Edwin eyed her with astonishment as she spoke. All her late conduct to his cousin Helen, to his uncle, and to Wallace, was now explained; and he saw in her flushed cheek, that it was not the patriot who desired this match, but the enamoured woman.

"You do not answer me?" said she: "Have you any apprehension that Sir William Wallace would reject the hand which would give him a crown? which would dispense happiness, to so many thousand people?" "No;" replied he; "I believe, that, much as he is devoted to the memory of her whom alone he can ever love; could he purchase true happi-

ness to Scotland by the sacrifice, he would espouse any virtuous woman who could bring him so blest a dowry. But in your case, my dear aunt, I can see no probability of such a consequence. In the first place, I know that now the virtuous Earl of Badenoch is no more, he neither respects nor fears the Cummins; and that he would scorn to purchase a crown, or even the people's happiness, by baseness in himself. To rise by their means, who will at any time immolate all that is sacred to man, to their caprice and fancied interests, would be unworthy of him; therefore I am sure, that if you wish to marry Sir William Wallace, you must not urge the use he may make of the Cummins, as an argument. He need not stoop to cajole the men, he can command. Did he not drive the one half of their clan, with the English host, to seek a shelter from his vengeance? And for them in the citadel; had he chosen to give the word, they would now be all

numbered with the dust! He lays down his power, lady; it is not taken from him. Earthly crowns are dross to him who looks for a heavenly one. Therefore, dear aunt, believe it no longer necessary to wound your delicacy, by offering him a hand, which cannot produce the good you meditate!"

The complexion of the Countess varied a thousand times during this answer:—her reason assented to many parts of it; but the passion she could not acknowledge to her nephew, urged her to persist. "You may be right, Edwin;" replied she; "but still, as there is nothing very repugnant in me, the project is surely worth trying! At any rate, a marriage with me would, by allying your noble friend to every illustrious house in the kingdom, make his interest theirs; and though he disclaims a higher honour, yet they would all unite to maintain him in the regency. In short, I am certain that Scotland will be wrecked when he leaves

the helm. And also, as you love your friend; though your young heart is yet unacquainted with the strange inconsistencies of the tenderer passion; allow me to whisper to you, that your friend will never be happy till he again lives in the bosom of domestic affection."——"Ah! but where is he to find it?"—cried Edwin: "what will ever restore his Marion to his arms?"——"I," cried she, "I will be more than ever Marion was to him;—she knew not, O! she could not, the boundless love that fills my heart for him!" Edwin's blushes at this wild declaration, told her that she had betrayed herself. She attempted to palliate, what she would, at this period, have wished to conceal; and covering her face with her hand, drew several heavy sighs, and said; "You who love Sir William Wallace, cannot be surprised that all who adore human excellence, should participate the sentiment. How could I see him, the benefactor of my family, the blessing to all Scotland, and not love

him?"——"True;" replied Edwin; "but not as a wife would love her husband!—You were married. And was it possible you should feel thus, when my uncle lived? So strong a passion, cannot have grown in your breast since he died; for love, surely could not enter the widow's heart at the side of an unburied husband!"——"Edwin!" replied she, "you, who never felt the throbs of this tyrant, judge with a severity you will one day regret: when you love yourself, and struggle with a passion that drinks your very life, you will pity Joanna of Mar, and forgive her!"——"I pity you now, aunt;" replied he; "but you bewilder me.—I cannot understand the possibility of a virtuous married woman, suffering any passion, of this kind, to get such domination over her, as to cause her one guilty sigh. For guilty must every wish be, that militates against the honour of her husband. Surely, love comes not in a whirlwind, to seize the soul at once;

but grows by degrees, according to the developement of the virtues of the object, and the reins we give ourselves, in their contemplation :—and, if it be virtue, that you love in Sir William Wallace; had you not virtues, amounting to a saint, in your noble husband ?"

The Countess perceived by the remarks of Edwin, that he was deeper read in the human heart than she had suspected; that he was neither ignorant of the feelings of the passion, nor of what ought to be its source; and therefore, with a deep blush, she replied—" Think for a moment, before you condemn me. I acknowledge every virtue that your uncle possessed; but, Oh! Edwin! he had frailties that you know not of; frailties that reduced me, to be, what the world never saw, the most unhappy of women."—Edwin turned pale at this charge against his uncle; and while he forbore to draw aside the veil which covered the sacred dead, by inquiring what those frailties were; little

did he think, that the artful woman meant a frailty, in which she had equally shared, and the consequences of which, had constrained her to become his wife. She proceeded; "I married your uncle when I was a girl, and knew not that I had a heart. I saw Wallace; his virtues stole me from myself; and I found——In short, Edwin, your uncle was of too advanced an age to sympathize with my younger heart. How could I then defend myself against the more congenial soul of your friend?—He was cold, during Mar's life; but he did not repulse me with unkindness; I therefore hope; and do you, my Edwin, gently influence him in my favour, and I will for ever bless you!"—— "Aunt," answered he, looking at her attentively; "can you, without displeasure, hear me speak a few, perhaps ungrateful, truths?" "Say what you will," said she, trembling; "only be my advocate with the noblest of human beings, and nought can I take amiss."

"I answer you, Lady Mar," resumed he, "with unqualified sincerity, because I love you, and venerate the memory of my uncle, whose frailties, whatever they might be, were visible to you alone. I answer you with sincerity, because I would spare you much future pain, and Sir William Wallace a task, that would pierce him to the soul. And as I know his heart, perhaps better than I do my own, I venture to answer for him. You confess that he already knows you love him; that he has received such demonstrations with coldness. Recollect what it is you love him for, and then judge if he could do otherwise. Could he approve affections, which a wife transferred to him from her husband; and that husband, his friend?"—"Ah! but he is now dead!" interrupted she; "that obstacle is removed." "But the other, which you raised yourself!" replied Edwin; "while a wife, you shewed to Sir William Wallace, that you could, not only indulge yourself in

wishes inimical to your nuptial faith, but divulge them to him. Ah! my aunt! what could you look for, as the consequence of this? My uncle yet lived; and you threw yourself into the arms of another man! That act, were you youthful as Hebe, and more tender than ever was fabled of the queen of love, I am sure the virtue of Wallace would never pardon. He never could pledge his faith, to one, whose passions could silence her sense of duty; and did he even love you; he would not, for the empire of the world, repose his honour in your keeping."

"Edwin!" cried she, at last summoning power to speak; for she had sat, during the latter part of his address, gasping with unutterable disappointment and rage; "are you not afraid, to breathe all this to me? I have given you my confidence, and do you abuse it? Do you stab me, when I ask you to heal?"—"No, my dear aunt;" replied he; "I speak the

truth to you, ungrateful as it is, to prevent you hearing it, in perhaps a more painful form, from Wallace himself."—"O! no;" cried she, with contemptuous haughtiness; "he is a man, and he knows how to pardon the excesses of love!—Look around you, foolish boy, and see how many of our proudest lords have united their fates with women, who, not only loved them while their husbands lived, but told them so, and left their homes and children to join their lovers! Have not these lovers since married them?—And what is there in me, a princess of the crowns of Scotland and of Norway; a woman, who has had the nobles of both kingdoms at her feet, and frowned upon them all; that I should now be contemned?—Is the ingrate, for whom alone, I ever felt a wish of love, is he to despise me for my passion?—You mistake, Edwin; you know not the heart of man."—"Not of the common race of men, perhaps;" replied he; "but certainly, that

of Sir William Wallace. Purity and he are too sincerely one, for him to allow personal vanity, to blind his eyes, to the deformity of the passion you describe. And, mean as I am, when compared with him, yet, I must aver, that were a married woman to love me, and not only tell me of it, but seek to excuse her frailty, I should see her contempt of the principles which are the only impregnable bulwarks of innocence, and shrink from her, as I would from pollution." "Then you declare yourself my enemy, Edwin?" "No;" replied he; "I speak to you as a son: but if you determine to declare to Sir William Wallace, what you have revealed to me, I shall not even observe on what has past; but leave you, unhappy lady, to the pangs I would have spared you."

He rose.—Lady Mar wrung her hands in a paroxysm of conviction, that what he said was true.—"Then, Edwin, I must despair!"—He looked at her with pity:

"Could you abhor the dereliction that your soul has thus made from duty, and leave him, (whom your unwidowed wishes now pursue,) to seek you; then I should say that you might be happy: for penitence appeases God, and shall it not find grace with man?"——"Blessed Edwin!" cried she, falling on his neck, and kissing him; "whisper but my penitence to Wallace; teach him to think, I hate myself. O! make me that in his eyes, which you would wish, and I will adore you on my knees!"

The door opened at this moment, and Lord Ruthven entered. The tears she was so profusely shedding on the bosom of his son, he attributed to some conversation she might be holding respecting her deceased lord, and taking her hand, after some words of condolence, he told her, that he came to propose her removal, on the following morning, from the scene of so many horrors. "I, my dear sister," said he, "will attend you as far as Perth.

After that, Edwin will be your guard to Braemar; and my Janet shall stay with you there, till time has softened your griefs." Lady Mar looked at him; "And where will be Sir William Wallace?" "He," answered Ruthven, "will be detained here. Some considerations, consequent to his receiving the French dispatches, will hold him some time longer south of the Forth." Lady Mar shook her head doubtfully, and reminded him, that the chiefs in the citadel had withheld the dispatches.

Lord Ruthven then informed her, that Lord Loch-awe, on hearing the particulars of the transaction in the citadel, had, unknown to Wallace, summoned the most powerful of his friends then near Stirling; and attended by them, and a large body of armed men, was carried in a litter to that city. In the same manner he entered the council-hall; and from that bed of honourable wounds, he threatened the assembly with instant death from his

troops without, unless they would immediately swear fealty to Wallace, and compel Badenoch to give up the French dispatches. Violent tumults were the consequence: but Loch-awe's litter being guarded by a double rank of armed chieftains; and the keep being hemmed round with men prepared to put to the sword every Scot, hostile to the proposition of their lord, the insurgents at last complied; and used some coercion, to force Badenoch to relinquish the royal packet. This triumph effected, Loch-awe and his train returned to the monastery. Wallace was resolute, not to re-assume the dignity he had resigned; and the re-acknowledgment of which, had been extorted from the lords in the citadel. "No;" said he, to Loch-awe; "it is indeed time that I should sink into shades, where I cannot be found; since I am become a word of contention amongst my countrymen."

Finding him not to be shaken, his friends urged him no farther: and Ruthven say-

ing, that on opening the French dispatches, he had found matter in them to prevent his seeking the repose of Braemar; —"Then we will wait for him here," cried the Countess.—"That cannot be;" answered Ruthven: "it would be against ecclesiastical law, to detain the sacred dead so long from his grave. Wallace, will doubtless visit Mar; therefore, to-morrow, I advise your leaving Falkirk."

Edwin seconded this counsel; and the Countess fearing to make further opposition, silently acquiesced. But her spirit was not so quiescent.—At night, when she went to her cell, her ever-wakeful fancy aroused a thousand images of alarm. She remembered the vow that Wallace had made, to seek Helen. He had already given up the regency; an office which might have detained him from such a pursuit; and might not a passion, softer than indignation against the ungrateful chieftains, have dictated this act? "Should

he love Helen, what is there not to fear!" cried she; "but should he meet her, I am undone!" Racked by jealousy, and goaded by contradicting expectations, she rose from her bed, and paced the room in wild disorder. At one moment she strained her mind, to recollect any kind look or word from him; and her imagination glowed with anticipated delight. Again she thought of his address to Helen, of his vow in her favour, and she was driven to despair. All Edwin's kind admonitions were forgotten, passion alone was awake; and forgetful of her rank and sex, and of her situation, she determined to see Wallace, and appeal to his heart, for the last time. She knew that he slept in an apartment at the other end of the monastery: and that she might pass thither unobserved, she glided into an opposite cell where lay a sick monk, and stealing away his cloak, threw it over her, and hurried along the cloisters.

The chapel doors were open, and as

she passed, she saw the bier of her lord awaiting the hour of its removal, and surrounded by priests singing anthems for the repose of his soul. No tender recollections, no remorse, knocked at the heart of Lady Mar as she sped along. Abandoned to all but thoughts of Wallace, she felt not that she had a soul; she acknowledged not that she had a hope, but what centered in the smiles of the man she was hastening to find.

His door was fastened with a latch: she gently opened it, and found herself in a moment in his chamber. She trembled, —she scarcely breathed; she approached his bed, but he was not there.—Disappointment palsied her heart, and she sunk upon a chair, almost fainting. "Am I betrayed?" said she, to herself: "Has that youthful hypocrite warned him hence?" And then again she thought: "But how should Edwin guess that I should venture here? O, no; my cruel stars alone, are against me!"

She now determined to await his return: and nearly three hours she passed there, enduring all the torments of guilt and misery; but he appeared not. At last, hearing the matin-bell, she started up, fearful that at the dawn of morning, her maids, might discover her absence. Compelled by some regard to reputation, with a most unwilling mind, she left the shrine of her idolatry, and once more crossed the cloisters. As she again drew towards the chapel, she saw Wallace himself issue from the door, supporting on his bosom the fainting head of Lady Ruthven. Edwin followed them. Lady Mar pulled her cowl over her face, and withdrew behind a pillar. "Ah!" thought she, "absenting myself from my duty, I fled from thee!" She listened with breathless attention to what might be said.

Lord Ruthven met them at that instant. "This night's watching by the bier of her brother," said Wallace, "has worn out your gentle lady: we strove to sup-

port her through these sad vigils, but at last she sunk." What Ruthven said in reply, as he took his wife in his arms, the Countess could not hear; but Wallace answered, "I have not seen her." "I left her late in the evening, drowned in tears;" replied Ruthven, in a more elevated tone; "I therefore suppose, that she, in secret, offers those prayers for her deceased husband, which my tender Janet pours over his grave."

"Such tears," replied Wallace, "are Heaven's own balm. I know they purify the heart whence they flow. And the prayers we breathe for those we love, unite our souls the closer to theirs. Look up, dear Lady Ruthven," said he, as she began to revive; "look up, and hear how you may, still on earth, retain the society of your beloved brother! Seek his spirit at the footstool of God. 'Tis thus I live, sister of my most venerated friend! My soul is ever on the wing for heaven,—in banquets, as in the solitary hour, in joy

as in sorrow—for there my treasure lives!"

"Wallace! Wallace!" cried Lady Ruthven, looking on his animated countenance with wondering rapture; "and art thou a man and a soldier? Oh! rather say, an angel; lent us here a little while, to teach us to live and to die!" A glowing blush passed over the pale but benign cheek of Wallace. "I am a soldier of Him who was, indeed, brought into the world to shew us by his life and death, how to be virtuous and happy. Know me by my life, to be his follower, and David himself wore not a more glorious title!"

Lady Mar, while she contemplated the matchless form before her, exclaimed to herself, "Why was it animated by as faultless a soul!—Oh! Wallace! wert thou less excellent, I might hope—but hell is in my heart and heaven in thine!" She tore her eyes from a view, which blasted while it charmed her, and rushed from the cloisters.

## CHAP. V.

THE sun rose as the funeral procession of the Earl of Mar moved from before the gates of the monastery at Falkirk. Lord Ruthven and Edwin mounted their horses. The maids of the two ladies led them forth towards the litters which were to convey them so long a journey. Lady Ruthven came first, and Wallace placed her tenderly in her carriage. The Countess next appeared, clad from head to foot in the deep weeds of widowhood. Her child followed, in the arms of its nurse. At sight of the innocent babe, whom he had so often seen pressed to the fond bosom of the father it was now following to his grave, tears rushed into the eyes of Wallace. Lady Mar meeting his commiserating look, applied it to herself, and with

a flush of joy sunk her head upon the shoulder of her maid. Wallace advanced to her respectfully, and handing her to her vehicle, urged her to cherish life for the sake of her child. She threw herself back in violent agitation on her pillow, and Wallace deeming the presence of her babe the surest comforter, laid it tenderly by her side. At that moment, before he had relinquished it, she bent her face upon his hands, and bathing them with her tears, faintly murmured, "Oh! Wallace, remember me!" Lord Ruthven rode up to bid adieu to his friend, and the litters moved on. Wallace promised that both he and Edwin should hear of him in the course of a few days; and affectionately grasping the hand of the latter, bade him farewel.

Hear of him they should, but not see him; for it was his determination to set off that night for Durham, where he was informed that Edward, with the remains of his army, now lay, and joined by his

young queen, meant to sojourn till his wounds were healed. Wallace, believing that his presence in Scotland could be no longer serviceable, and might engender continual intestine divisions, did not hesitate in fixing his course. His first object was to fulfil his vow to Mar; (and he thought it probable, that Helen might be carried to the English court;) and then attempt an interview with young Bruce, to learn how far he had succeeded in persuading his father to leave the vassalage of Edward, and to resume the sceptre of his ancestors.

To effect his plan without hindrance, on the disappearance of the funeral cavalcade, he retired to his apartment to address a letter to Lord Ruthven. In this epistle, he told the chief, that he was going on an expedition which, he hoped would prove beneficial to his country; but as it was an enterprise of rashness, he would not so load his soul, as to make any one his companion: he therefore begged

Lord Ruthven to teach his friends to consider with candour, a flight, which they might otherwise deem unkind.

All the brother was in his letter to Edwin; conjuring him to prove his affection for his friend, by quietly abiding at home till they should meet again in Scotland.

He wrote to Andrew Murray, (now Lord Bothwell) also addressing him as the first chieftain who, with him, had struck a blow for Scotland; and as his dear friend and brother soldier, he confided to his care, the valiant troop which had followed him from Lanerk;—" Tell them," said he, " that in obeying you, they still serve with me: they perform their duty to Scotland, at home—I, abroad: our aim is the same; and we shall meet again at the happy consummation of our labours."

These letters he enclosed in one to Scrymgeour, with orders to dispatch two of them according to their directions; but that to Murray, Scrymgeour was himself

to take, at the head of the Lanerkers, to that nobleman, who would explain to him his farther wishes.

At the approach of twilight, Wallace quitted the monastery; leaving his packet with the porter, to deliver to Scrymgeour when he should arrive at his usual hour As the chief meant to assume a minstrel's garb, that he might travel the country unrecognised as its once adored Regent, he took his way towards a cave in Tor wood, where he had, at noon, deposited his means of disguise. When arrived there, he disarmed himself of all but his sword, dirk, and breastplate; he covered his tartan gambeson with a minstrel's cassoc; and staining his bright complexion with the juice of a nut, concealed his brighter locks beneath a close bonnet. Being thus completely equipped, he threw his harp over his shoulder; and having first, in that deep solitude, where no eye beheld, no ear heard, but that of God, invoked a blessing on his enterprise; with

a buoyant spirit, rejoicing in the power in whose light he moved, he went forth; and under the sweet serenity of a summer night, pursued his way along the broom-clad hills of Muiravenside.

All lay in profound rest.—Not a human creature crossed his path, till the carol of the lark summoned the husbandman to his toil, and spread the thymy hills and daisied pastures with herds and flocks. As the lowing of cattle descending to the water, and the bleating of sheep hailing the morning beam, came on the breeze, mingled with the joyous voices of their herdsmen calling to each other from afar; as all met the ear of Wallace, his conscious heart could not but whisper—"I have been the happy instrument to effect this! I have restored every man to his paternal fields! I have filled all these honest breasts with gladness!"

He stopped at a little moss-covered cabin, on a burn side beneath Craig castle in Mid-Lothian, and was hospitably

entertained by its simple inhabitants. Wallace repaid their kindness with a few ballads, which he sang, accompanied by his harp. As he gave the last notes of *King Arthur's Death in Glory*, the worthy cottar raised his head from the spade on which he leaned, and asked, whether he could not sing the present glory of Scotland? "Our renowned Wallace," said he, "is worth King Arthur and all the knights of his round table; for he not only conquers for us in war, but establishes us in happy peace. Who, like him, of all our great captains, ever took such care of the poor, as to give them not only the bread that sustains temporal, but that which supports eternal life? Sing us then his praises, minstrel, and tarry with us days instead of hours." The wife, and the children, who clung around their melodious visitant, joined in this request. Wallace, rising, with a saddened smile, replied; "I cannot do what you require; but I can yield you an op-

portunity to oblige Sir William Wallace. Will you take a letter from him, of which I am the bearer, to Lord Dundaff at Berwick? I have been seeking, what I have now found, a faithful Scot, with whom I could confide this trust. It is to reveal to a father's heart, the death of him for whom Scotland must mourn to her latest generations.

The honest shepherd gladly accepted this mission; and his wife, loading their guest's scrip with her choicest fruits and cakes, accompanied him, followed by the children, to the bottom of the hill.

In this manner, sitting at the board of the lowly, and sleeping beneath the thatched roof, did Wallace pursue his way through Tweed dale and Ettrick forest, till he reached the Cheviots. From every lip he heard his own praises; heard them with redoubled satisfaction, for he could have no suspicion of their sincerity, as they were uttered, without expectation of their ever reaching the Regent's ear.

It was the sabbath-day when he mounted the Cheviots. He stood on one of their summits, and leaning on his harp, contemplated the fertile dales he left behind. The gay villagers, in their best attires, were thronging to their churches; while the aged, too infirm for the walk, were sitting in the sun at their cottage doors, adoring their Almighty Benefactor in the sublimer temple of the universe. All spoke of security and happiness. "Thus I leave thee, beloved Scotland? And may I, on revisiting these hills, still behold thy sons and daughters rejoicing in the Heaven-bestowed peace of their land!"

Having descended into Northumberland, his well-replenished scrip was his provider; and when it was exhausted, he purchased food from the peasantry: he would not accept the hospitality of a country, he had so lately trodden as an enemy. Here he heard his name mentioned with terror, as well as admiration. While many related circumstances of mi-

sery, to which the ravaging of their lands had reduced them, all concurred in praising the moderation with which the Scottish leader treated his conquests.

Late in the evening, Wallace arrived on the bank of the river that surrounds the episcopal city of Durham. He crossed Framlingate bridge.—His minstrel garb prevented his being stopped by the guard at the gate; but as he entered its porch, a horse, that was going through, started at his abrupt appearance. Its rider suddenly exclaimed, " Fool, thou dost not see Sir William Wallace!" Then turning to the disguised knight, he called out: " Harper, you frighten my horse: draw back till I pass." Wallace, not displeased to find the terror of him so great amongst the enemies of Scotland, that they even addressed their animals as sharers in their dread; stood out of the way;—and saw the speaker to be a young Southron knight, who with difficulty kept a seat on his restive steed. Rearing and

plunging, it essayed to throw its rider; and would certainly have effected its purpose, had not Wallace put forth his hand and seized the bridle. By his assistance, the horse was soothed; and the young lord thanking him for his services, told him that as a reward, he would introduce him to play before the queen, who that day held a feast at the bishop's palace. Wallace, who thought it probable, that he might either see or hear of Lady Helen, in this assembly, and also find access to Bruce, gladly accepted the offer. The knight, who was Sir Piers Gaveston, ordering the minstrel to follow him, turned his horse towards the city; and conducted Wallace through the gates of the citadel, to the palace within its walls.

On entering the banquetting hall, he was placed by the knight in the musicians' gallery, there to await his summons to her majesty. The entertainment being spread, and the room full of guests,

the queen was led in by the haughty bishop of the see; the King being too ill of his wounds, to allow of his joining so large a company. The beauties of the lovely sister of Philip le Bel seemed to fill the gaze and hearts of all the by-standers, and none appeared to remember that Edward was absent. Wallace hardly glanced on her youthful charms; his eyes roamed from side to side in quest of a fairer, a dearer object; the captive daughter of his dead friend! She was not there; neither was De Valence; but Buchan, Athol, and Soulis were near the royal Margaret, in all the pomp of feudal grandeur. In vain waved the trophied banners over their heads; they sat sullen and revengeful; for the defeat on the Carron, had obscured the victory of Falkirk, and instead of having presented Edward to his young queen, as the conqueror of Scotland, she had found him, and them, fugitives in the castle of Durham.

As soon as the royal band had ceased

to play, Gaveston pressed forward towards the queen, and told her he had presumed to introduce a travelling minstrel into the gallery, hoping that she would order him to perform for her amusement, as he could sing legends from the descent of the Romans to the victories of Edward I. With all the eagerness of her age in quest of novelties, she commanded that he should be immediately brought to her.

Gaveston having presented him; Wallace bowed, with the respect due to her sex and dignity, and to the esteem, in which he held her royal brother. Margaret desired him to place his harp before her, and begin to sing. As he knelt on one knee, and struck its sounding chords, she stopped him by the inquiry of whence he came? "From the north country," was his reply. "Were you ever in Scotland?" asked she. "Often."

The young lords crowded round, to hear this dialogue between majesty and lowli-

ness.—She smiled, and turning to them, said, "Do not accuse me of disloyalty, but I have a curiosity to ask another question." "Nothing your majesty wishes to know," said Bishop Beck, "can be amiss." "Then tell me," cried she, "(for you, wandering minstrels see all great people, good or bad; else how could you make songs about them?) did you ever meet Sir William Wallace in your travels?" "I have, madam." "Pray tell me what he is like! you, probably, will be unprejudiced; and that is what I can hardly expect in this case, from any of these brave lords." Wallace, wishing to avoid further questioning on this subject, replied, "I have never seen him so distinctly, as to be enabled to prove any right to your majesty's opinion of my judgment." "Cannot you sing me some ballad about him?" inquired she, laughing; "and if you are a little poetical in your praise, I will excuse you; as my royal brother thinks this bold Scot would have shone

bright in a fairer cause." "My songs are dedicated to glory set in the grave;" returned Wallace; "therefore Sir William Wallace's faults, or virtues, will not be sung by me." "Then he is a very young man, I suppose;—for you are not old, and yet you talk of not surviving him?—I was in hopes," cried she, addressing Beck; "that my lord the King, would have brought this Wallace to have supped with me here; but for once, rebellion overcame its master."

Beck made some reply, which Wallace did not hear: and the queen again turning to him, said, "My good minstrel, we French ladies are very fond of beauty; and I shall not a little be reconciled to these northern realms, if you tell me that he is any thing like as handsome as any one of the gay knights by whom you see me surrounded?" Wallace smiled, and replied, "The beauty of Sir William Wallace, lies in a strong arm and a tender

heart: and if these be charms in the eyes of female goodness, he may hope, not to be quite an object of abhorrence to the sister of Philip of France!" The minstrel bowed as he spoke, and the young queen laughing again, said, "I wish not to come within the influence of either. But sing me some Scottish legend; and I will promise, wherever I see the knight, to treat him with all courtesy due to his valour."

Wallace again struck the chords of his harp; and with a voice, whose full and melodious tones rolled round the vast dome of the hall, he sang the triumphs of Reuther.([1]) The queen, as he sang, fixed her eyes upon him; and when he ended, she turned and said to Gaveston, "If the voice of this man had been Wallace's trumpet, I should not now wonder at the discomfiture of England. He almost tempted me from my allegiance, as the warlike animation of his notes seemed to

charge the flying Southrons." Speaking, she rose; and presenting a jewelled ring to the minstrel, left the apartment.

The lords crowded out after her; and the musicians, coming down from the gallery, seated themselves with much rude jollity, to regale on the remnants of the feast. Wallace, who had before discovered the senachie(k) of Bruce, by the escutcheon of Annandale, suspended at his neck; gladly saw him approach. He came to invite the stranger minstrel to partake of their fare. Wallace did not appear to decline it; and as the court bard seemed rather devoted to the pleasures of wine, he found it not difficult to draw from him what he wanted to know. He learnt that young Bruce was still in the castle under arrest; "and," added the man, "I shall feel no little mortification in being obliged, in the course of half an hour, to relinquish these festivities for the gloomy duties of his apartment."

This was precisely the point to which Wallace had wished to lead him; and pleading fatigue, he offered to supply the senachie's place in the earl's chamber. The half-intoxicated bard accepted the proposition with eagerness; and as the shades of night had long closed in, he conducted his illustrious substitute to the large round tower[1] of the castle; informing him, as they went along, that he was to continue playing in a recess adjoining Bruce's room, till the last vesper bell from the abbey in the neighbourhood, should give the signal for his laying aside the harp. By that time Bruce would be fallen asleep, and he might then lie down on the pallet in the recess.

All this, Wallace promised punctually to obey; and being conducted by the senachie up a spiral staircase, was left in the little anti-room. The chief drew the cowl of his minstrel cloak over his face, and set his harp before him in order to play. He could see through its strings,

that a group of knights were in earnest conversation at the farther end of the apartment; but they spoke so low, that he could not distinguish what was said. One of the party turned round; and the light of a suspended lamp, discovered him to be the brave Earl of Gloucester, whom Wallace had taken and released at Berwick. Another, the same ray shewed to be Percy, Earl of Northumberland. Wallace, found the strangeness of his situation. He, the conqueror of Edward, to have been singing as a mendicant in his halls: and, having given laws to the two great men before him, he now sat in their view as unobserved as unfeared! Their figures concealed that of Bruce: but at last, when all rose together, he heard Gloucester say in rather an elevated voice, "Keep up your spirits.—This envy of your base countrymen, must recoil upon themselves. It cannot be long before King Edward discovers the motives

of their accusations, and his noble nature will acquit you accordingly."

"My acquittal," replied Bruce in a firm tone, "can not restore, what Edward's injustice has rifled from me: and, as that is the case, I am willing to abide by the test of my own actions; and by them to open the door of my freedom. Your King may depend on it," added he, with a sarcastic smile, "that I am not a man to be influenced against the right. Where I owe duty, I will pay it to the uttermost farthing."

Percy, who did not apprehend the true meaning of this speech, immediately answered, "I believe you, and so must all the world: for did you not give brave proofs of it, in bearing arms against the triumphant Sir William Wallace?" "I did indeed give proofs of it,"—returned Bruce, "which I hope the world will one day know,—by bearing arms against the usurper of my country's rights! and in

defiance of injustice and treason, before men and angels I swear," cried he, "to perform my duty to the end; to retrieve to honour, the insulted, the degraded name of Bruce!"

The two earls fell a little back, before the vehement action which accompanied this burst from the soul of Bruce; and Wallace caught a glimpse of his youthful form, which stood pre-eminent in patriotic virtue between the Southron lords: his fine countenance glowed, and his brave spirit seemed to emanate in light from every part of his body. "My prince and brother!" exclaimed Wallace to himself, ready to rush forward and throw himself at his feet, or into his arms.

Gloucester, as little as Northumberland, comprehending his ambiguous declaration, replied, "Let not your heart, my brave friend, burn too hotly against the King, for this arrest. He will be the more urgent to obliterate by kindness this injustice, when he understands the

aims of the Cummins. I have, myself, felt his misplaced wrath; and who now is more favoured by Edward than Ralph de Monthermer? My case will be yours. Good night, Bruce.—May propitious dreams, repeat the augury of your true friends!" Percy shook hands with the young earl, and the two English lords left the room together.

Wallace could now take a more leisurely survey of Bruce. He no longer wore the gay embroidered hacqueton; his tunic was black velvet; and all the rest of his garments accorded with the same mourning hue. Soon after the lords quitted him, the buoyant elasticity of his figure, which before seemed ready to rise from the earth, so was his soul elevated by his sublime resolves, gave way to melancholy retrospections; and he threw himself into a chair, with his hands clasped upon his knee, and his eyes fixed in musing gaze upon the floor. It was now that Wallace touched

the strings of his harp. The *Death of Cuthullin* wailed from the sounding notes: but Bruce heard, as though he heard them not; they soothed his mood, without his perceiving what it was that calmed, yet deepened the saddening thoughts which possessed him. His posture remained the same; and sigh after sigh, gave the only response to the strains of the bard.

Wallace grew impatient for the chimes of that vesper-bell which, by assuring Bruce's attendants that he was gone to rest, would secure from interruption the conference he meditated. Two servants entered.—Bruce, scarcely looking up, bade them withdraw; he should not need their attendance; he did not know when he should go to bed; and he desired to be no further disturbed. The men obeyed; and Wallace, immediately changing the melancholy strain of his harp, struck the chords to the proud triumph he had played in the hall. Not one note

of either ballad, had he yet sung to Bruce; but when he came to the passage in the latter, appropriated to these lines:

> "Arise, glory of Albin, from thy cloud,
> And shine upon thine own!"

he could not forbear giving the words voice.—Bruce started from his seat. He looked towards the minstrel, he walked the room in great disorder. The pealing sounds of the harp, and his own mental confusion, prevented his distinguishing that it was not the voice of his senachie. The words alone, he heard; and they seemed a call which his heart panted to obey. The hand of Wallace paused upon the instrument. He looked around to see, that observation was indeed at a distance. Not that he dreaded harm to himself; for his magnanimous mind, courageous from infancy, by a natural instinct had never known personal fear: but anxious not to precipitate Bruce

into useless danger, he first satisfied himself that all was safe; and then—as the young earl sat in a paroxysm of racking reflections, (for they brought self-blame; or rather a blame on his father, which pierced him to the heart,) Wallace slowly advanced from the recess. The agitated Bruce, accidentally raising his head, to his surprise beheld a man in a minstrel's garb, much too tall to be his senachie, and who approached him, with a caution, which he thought portended treachery. He sprang on his feet, and caught his sword from the table; but at the moment, when perhaps his voice, by alarming the attendants in the next room, might have surrounded him with danger, Wallace threw off his cowl. Bruce stood gazing on him, stiffened with astonishment. Wallace, in a low voice exclaimed, "Do you not know me, my prince?" Bruce, without speaking, threw his arms about his neck. He was silent as he hung on him, but his tears flowed: he had much

to say, but excess of emotion rendered it unutterable. Wallace, as he returned the fond embrace of friendship, said, "How is it, that I not only see you a close prisoner, but in these weeds?" Bruce, at last forced himself to articulate: "I have known misery in all its forms, since we parted—but, I have not power to name even my grief of griefs, while trembling at the peril to which you have exposed yourself by seeking me! The vanquisher of Edward, the man who snatched Scotland from his grasp, were he known to be within these walls, would be a prize for which the boiling revenge of the tyrant would give half his kingdom! Think then, my friend, how I shudder at this daring. I am surrounded by spies: and should you be discovered, Robert Bruce will then have the curses of his country, added to the judgments, which already have fallen on his head. As he spoke, they sat down together on a bench, and he continued;

"Before I answer your questions, tell me what immediate cause could bring you to seek the alien Bruce in prison, and by what stratagem you came in this disguise into my apartment? Tell me the last, that I may judge, by the means, of your present safety."

Wallace briefly related the events which sent him from Scotland, his rencontre with Piers Gaveston, and his arrangement with the senachie. To the first part of the narrative, Bruce listened with indignation. "I knew," exclaimed he, "from the boastings of Athol and Buchan, that they had left in Scotland some dregs of their own refractory spirits; but I could not have guessed, that envy had so far obliterated gratitude in the hearts of my countrymen, that so many could be persuaded to follow the pernicious counsels of the Cummins' emissaries. The wolves have now driven the shepherd from the fold," cried he, "and the flock will soon be devoured! Fatal was the

hour for Scotland and your friend, when you yielded to the voice of faction; and relinquished the power which would have finally given peace to the nation!"

Wallace then recapitulated his reasons, for having refrained from enforcing the obedience of the young Lord Badenoch, and his adherents; and for abdicating a dignity, which he could no longer maintain, without shedding the blood of the misguided men who opposed him. Bruce acknowledged the wisdom of this conduct; but could not restrain his animadversions on the characters of the Cummins. He told Wallace, that he had met the two sons of the late Lord Badenoch in Guienne; that James, who now pretended such resentment of his father's death, was ever a rebellious son. John, who yet remained in France, was of a less violent temper; "But," added the prince, "I have been taught to believe, by one who will never counsel me more, that all the Cummins, male and female, would be

ready, at any time, to sacrifice earth and heaven to their ambition. It is to Buchan and Athol that I owe my prolonged confinement; and to them I may date the premature death of my dear father."

The start of Wallace, declared his shock at this information. "How?" exclaimed he; "The Earl of Carrick dead? Fell, fell assassins of their country!" The swelling emotions of his soul would not allow him to proceed, and Bruce resumed:—"It is for him I wear these sable garments,—poor emblems of the mournings of my soul; mournings, not so much for his loss, (and that is grievous as ever son bore;) but because he lived not to let the world know, what he really was; he lived not to bring into light, his long obscured honour!—There, there Wallace, is the bitterness of this cup to me!"

"But can you not sweeten it, my dear prince," cried Wallace, "by retrieving, all that he was cut off from

redeeming? To open the way to you, I came."—"And I will enter where you point;" returned Bruce; "but heavy is my woe, that, knowing the same spirit was in my father's bosom, he should be torn from the opportunity to make it manifest: O! Wallace! that he should be made to lie down in a dishonoured grave! Had he lived, my friend, he would have brightened that name which rumour has sullied; and I should have doubly gloried in wearing the name which he had rendered so worthy of being coupled with the kingly title. Noble was he in soul; but he fell amidst a race of men, whose art was equal to their venality, and he became their dupe. Betrayed by friendship, he sunk into the snare; for he had no dishonour in his own breast, to warn him of what might be the villany of others. He believed the cajoling speeches of Edward; who, on the first offence of Baliol, had promised to place my father on the throne. Month after month passed away, and the

engagement was unperformed. The disturbances on the continent, seemed, to his confiding nature, a sufficient excuse for the various delays; and he waited in quiet expectation, till your name, my friend, rose glorious in Scotland. My father and myself were then in Guienne. Edward persuaded him that you affected the crown: and he returned with that deceiver, to draw his sword against his people and their ambitious idol, as he believed you to be; and grievous has been the expiation of that fatal hour!—Your conference with him on the banks of the Carron, opened his eyes: he saw what his credulity had made Scotland suffer; what a wreck he had made of his own fame; and, from that moment, he resolved to follow another course. But the habit of trusting the affection of Edward, inclined him rather to remonstrate on his rights, than immediately to take up arms against him: yet, resolved not to strike a second blow on his people; when you

assailed the Southron camp, he fled. I, on quitting you, came up with him in Mid-Lothian; and he, never having missed me from the camp, concluded that I appeared thus late, from having kept in the rear of his division."

Bruce, now proceeded to narrate to Wallace, the particulars of his father's meeting with the King at Durham. Instead of that monarch receiving the Earl of Carrick with his wonted familiar welcome, he turned coldly from him when he approached; and suffered him to take his usual seat at the royal table, without deigning him the slightest notice. Bruce was absent from the banquet; having determined, never again to mingle in social communion with the man, whom he was now to regard as the usurper of his rights. The absence of his heroic eye, which had, once before, looked the insolent voluptuary Buchan into, his inherent insignificance, emboldened the audacity of this enemy of his house; and, supported by

Athol on the one side, and Soulis on the other, he seized a pause in the conversation, (that he might draw the attention of all present on the disgrace of the Earl of Carrick,) and said, with affected carelessness,—“ My lord, to-day you dine with clean hands; the last time I saw you at meat, you eat your own blood!” The Earl of Carrick turned on him a look, which asked him to explain. Lord Buchan laughed, and continued; “ When we last met at table, was it not in his Majesty's tent, after the victory at Falkirk? You were then red from the slaughter of those very people to whom, I understand, you now give the fondling appellation of sons! Having recognised the relationship, it was not probable we should again see your hands in their brave livery; and their present pallid hue, convinces, more than myself, of the truth of our information.”(m)

“ And I,” cried Edward, rising on the couch, to which his wounds con-

fined him, "that I have discovered a traitor!—You fled, Lord Carrick, at the first attack which the Scots made on my camp; and you drew thousands after you. I know you too well, to believe that cowardice dictated the motion. It was treachery, accursed treachery to your friend and King; and you shall feel the weight of his displeasure!"——"To this hour King Edward," replied the earl, starting from his chair, "I have been more faithful to you, than to my country or my God! I heard, saw, and believed, only what you determined; and I became your slave; your vile, oppressed slave!—The victim of your artifice!—How often have you, before these Scottish battles, promised, were they successful, that you would restore me to the crown of my ancestors! I believed you; and I engaged all who yet acknowledged the influence of Bruce, to support your cause in Scotland. Was not this the promise, by which you allured me to the field of Falkirk?—

And when I had covered myself, as the Lord Buchan says, with the blood of my children; when I asked my friend for the crown I had served for, what was his answer? *Have I nought to do but to win kingdoms to give to you?* Thus, then, did a king, a friend, break his often repeated word! What wonder, then, that I should feel the indignation of a prince, and a friend; and leave him to defenders, whom he seemed more highly to approve? But of treachery, what have I shewn? Rather confidence, King Edward: and the confidence that was awakened in the fields of Palestine, brought me hither to remonstrate with you on my rights, when, I might, by throwing myself into the arms of my people, have demanded them at the head of a victorious army!"

Edward, who had been prepared by the Cummins to discredit all that Carrick might say in his defence, turned with a look of contempt towards him, and said, "You have been persuaded to act like a

madman; and as maniacs, both yourself and your son shall be guarded, till I have leisure to consider any rational evidence you may in future have to offer in your defence."—"And is this the manner, King Edward, that you treat your friend?" —"The vassal," replied Edward, "who presumes upon the condescension of his prince, and acts as if he really were his equal, ought to meet the punishment due to such arrogance. You saved my life on the walls of Acre; but you owed that duty to the son of your liege lord. In the fervour of youth, I inconsiderately rewarded you with my friendship; and the return is treason." As he concluded, he turned from Lord Carrick; and a guard immediately seizing the earl, took him to the keep of the castle.

His son, who had been sought in the Carrick quarters, and laid under an arrest, met his father in the guard-chamber. Carrick could not speak; but motioning to be conducted to the place appointed

for his prison, the men, with equal silence, led him through a range of apartments which occupied the middle story, and stopping in the farthest, left him there with his son. Bruce, who was not so much surprised at his own arrest, as at that of his father, beheld all in speechless astonishment until the guards withdrew; and then seeing Lord Carrick, with a changing countenance, throw himself on the bed, (for it was in his sleeping room they had left him;) he exclaimed, "What is the meaning of this, my father? Has any charge against me, brought suspicion on you?"——"No, Robert, no;" replied the earl; "it is I who have brought you into this prison, and into disgrace; disgrace with all the world, for having tacitly surrendered my inheritance to the invader of my country. Honest men abhor, villains treat me with contumely: and he for whom I incurred all this, because I would not, when my eyes were opened to my sin, again embrue my hands

in the blood of my country, Edward thrusts me from him! You are implicated in my crime; and for not joining the Southrons, to repel the Scots from the royal camp, we are both prisoners!"

"Then," replied Bruce, "he shall feel that you have a son who has courage to be what he suspects; and, from this hour, I proclaim eternal enmity to the betrayer of my father; to the ingrate, who embraced you, to destroy!"

The indignation of the youthful prince, wrought him to so vehement a declaration of resolute and immediate hostility, that Lord Carrick was obliged to give his transports way; but when he saw that his son had exhausted his denunciations, though not the determined purposes of his soul; (for he trod the room, with a step, which seemed to shake its foundations with the power of his mighty mind;) Carrick gazed on him with pride, yet grief; and sighing heavily, called him to approach him. "Come to me, my Ro-

bert!" said he; "hear, and abide by the last injunctions of your father; for, from this bed I shall never rise more. A too late sense of the injuries, which I have joined in inflicting on the people, I was born to protect; and the ingratitude of him for whom I have offended my God, and wronged my country, have broken my heart. I shall die, Robert, but you will avenge me!"—"May God so prosper me!" cried Bruce, raising his arms to heaven. Carrick resumed: "Attend to me, my dear and brave son, and do not mistake the nature of my last wish. Do not allow the, perhaps, too forcible word I have used, to hurry you into any personal revenge on Edward. Let him live to feel, and to regret, the outrages he has committed on the peace and honour of his too faithful friend. Pierce him on the side of his ambition; there he is vulnerable; and there you will heal while you wound. This would be my revenge, dear Robert; that you should one day have

his life in your power; and in memory of what I now say, spare it. When I am gone, think not of private resentment. Let your aim be, the recovery of the kingdom, which Edward rifled from your fathers. Join the virtuous and triumphant Wallace, as soon as you can make your escape from these walls. Tell him of my remorse, of my fate; and be guided wholly by his counsels. To ensure the success of this enterprise, my son; a success, to which I look, as to the only means of redeeming the name I have lost; and of inspiring my separated spirit with courage to meet the free-born souls of my ancestors;—urge not your own destruction by any premature disclosure of your resolutions. For my sake, and for your country's, suppress your resentment; threaten not the King of England; provoke not the unworthy Scottish lords who have gained his ear;—but bury all in your own bosom, till you can join Wallace; and by his arm, and your own,

seat yourself firmly in the throne of your fathers. That moment will sufficiently avenge me on Edward!—and in that moment, Robert, or at least as soon as circumstances will allow, let the English ground which will then hold my body, give up its dead! Remove me to a Scottish grave: and standing over my ashes, proclaim to them who might have been my people, that for every evil I suffered to fall on Scotland, I have since felt answering pangs; and that dying, I beg their forgiveness; and bequeath them, my best blessing, my virtuous son, to reign in my stead!"

These injunctions to assert his own honour, and that of his father, were readily sworn to by Bruce; but he could not so easily be made to quell the imperious indignation which was precipitating him to immediate and loud revenge. The dying earl, trembled before the overwhelming passion of his son's wrath and grief. Treated with outrage and contumely, he

saw his father stricken to the earth before him, and he could not bear to hear of any temporizing with his murderers. But all this tempest of the soul, the wisdom-inspired arguments of the earl at last becalmed, but did not subdue. He convinced his son's reason, by shewing him that caution would ensure the blow; and that his aim could only be effected, by remaining silent, till he could publish his father's honour, evidenced by his own heroism. "Do this," added Carrick, "and I shall live fair in the memories of men. But be violent, threaten Edward from these walls, menace the wretches who have trodden on the grey hairs of their prince, and your voice will be heard no more: this ground will drink your blood; and blindly-judging infamy, will for ever after point to our obscure graves!"

Such persuasives at last prevailed with Bruce; and next day, having written the few hasty lines which Wallace received

at Falkirk, he intrusted them to his senachie, (who was a Scot that loved his country,) to convey safely to Scotland. He obeyed by means of a youth; who, having stolen from Annandale to see a brother amongst Bruce's followers, had asked leave to return. The senachie granted him permission, provided he would faithfully and secretly deliver a packet into the hands of the Lord Regent. This the young man executed with fidelity.

Shortly after it was dispatched, the prophecy of Lord Carrick was verified: he was seized in the night with spasms, and died in the arms of his son.

When Bruce related these particulars, his grief and indignation became so violent, that Wallace was obliged to enforce the dying injunctions of the father he so vehemently deplored, to moderate the delirium of his soul. "Ah!" exclaimed the young earl, "I have indeed needed some friend to save me from myself, some

one to reconcile me to the Robert Bruce, who has so long slept in the fatal delusions which poisoned his father, and laid him low! Oh! Wallace! at times I am mad. I know not whether this forbearance be not cowardice. I doubt whether my father meant what he spoke; that he did not yet seek to preserve the life of his son, at the expense of his honour; and I have been ready to precipitate myself on the steel of Edward, so that he should but meet the point of mine!"

Bruce then added, that in his more rational meditations, he had resolved to attempt an escape in the course of a few days. He understood that a deputation of English barons, seeking a ratification of their charter, were soon to arrive in Durham; the bustle attendant on their business, would, he hoped, draw attention from him, and afford him the opportunity he sought. "In that case," continued he, "I should have made directly to Stirling; and had not Providence con-

ducted you to me, I might have unconsciously thrown myself into the midst of enemies. James Cummin is too ambitious, to have allowed my life to pass unattempted."

Whilst he was yet speaking, the door of the chamber burst open, and Bruce's two attendants rushed into the room with looks aghast. Bruce and Wallace started on their feet, and laid their hands on their swords. But instead of any thing hostile appearing behind the servants, the inebriated figure of the senachie staggered forward. The men, hardly awake, stood staring and trembling, and looking from the senachie to Wallace; at last one, extricating his terror-struck tongue, and falling on his knees, exclaimed, "Blessed St. Andrew! is this the senachie and his wraith."[n] Bruce perceived the mistake of his servants; and explaining to them, that a travelling minstrel had obliged the senachie by performing his duty, he bade them retire to rest and think no more of their alarm.

The intoxicated bard, threw himself without ceremony on his pallet in the recess; and the servants, though convinced, still shaking with superstitious fright, almost with tears entreated permission to bring their hether beds into their lord's chamber. To deny them was impossible; and all further converse with Wallace, that night, being put an end to, a couch was laid for him in an interior apartment; and with a grateful pressure of the hands, in which their hearts silently embraced, they separated to repose.

## CHAP. VI.

THE second matin-bell sounded from the abbey before the eyes of Wallace opened from the deep sleep which had sealed them. A bath refreshed him from

every toil; and having renewed the stain on his face and hands, with the juice of the nut which he carried about him; and once more covered his martial figure, and golden hair, with the minstrel's cassoc and cowl, he rejoined his friend.

Bruce had previously affected to consider the senachie as much disordered by his last night's excess; and ordering him from his presence for at least a day, desired that the travelling minstrel should be sent to him, when he rose, to supply his place.

The table was spread when Wallace entered, and several servants were in attendance. Bruce, at sight of his friend hastily rose and would have embraced him, so did his comforted heart spring forward to meet him; but before these people it would have been more than imprudent; and hailing him with only one of his love-beaming looks, he made a sign to him to sit down at another board near to his own. While he eat, to prevent

suspicion in the attendants, (some of whom were spies of Edward's,) he discoursed with Wallace on subjects relative to northern literature; and repeated to him, with bursts of admiration, many passages apposite to his own heroic sentiments, from Ossian, and other Scottish bards.

The repast was finished; and Wallace, to maintain his assumed character, while the servants were removing the table, was tuning his harp, when the Earl of Gloucester entered the room. The earl told Bruce, that after much searching over the castle for the northern minstrel, the King's seneschal had at last discovered that he was in the keep with him. On this being intimated to Gloucester, he rather chose to come himself to demand the harper of his friend, than to subject him, to perhaps, the insolence of the royal servants. The King desired to hear him sing The Triumph with which he had so much pleased the queen. Bruce turned pale at

this message; and was opening his mouth to utter a denial, when Wallace, who read in his countenance what he was going to say, and aware of the consequences, immediately spoke: "If my Lord Bruce will grant permission, I should wish to comply with the King of England's request."——"Minstrel!" replied Bruce, casting on him a powerful expression of what was passing in his mind; "you know not, perhaps, that the King of England is at enmity with me, and cannot mean well to any that has been my guest or servant! The Earl of Gloucester will excuse your attendance in the presence—."

"Not for my life, or your minstrel's!" replied the earl; "the King would suspect some mystery; and perhaps this innocent man might fall into peril. But as it is, his Majesty merely wishes to hear him play and sing; and I pledge you my word, he shall return in safety."

Further opposition would only have

courted danger; and Bruce, with as good a grace as he could assume, gave his consent. A page, who followed Gloucester, took up the harp; and Wallace, with a glance at his friend, which spoke the fearless mind with which he ventured into the power of his enemy, accompanied Gloucester out of the room.

The earl moved swiftly forward; and leading him through a double line of guards, the folding doors of the royal apartment were thrown open by two knights in waiting; and Wallace found himself in the presence. The King lay, perforated with the wounds which Wallace's own hand had given him, upon a couch overhung with a crimson velvet canopy, whose long golden fringes swept the floor. His crown stood on a cushion at his head; and his queen, the blooming Margaret of France, sat, full of smiles, at his feet. The young Countess of Gloucester occupied a seat by her side.

The countess, who from indisposition

had not been at court the preceding day, fixed her eyes on the minstrel as he advanced into the middle of the room, where the page, by Gloucester's orders, planted the harp. She observed the manner of his obeisance to the King and queen, and to herself, and the queen whispering her with a smile, said, as he took his station at the harp; "Have your British troubadours usually such an air as that? Am I right; or am I wrong?"—"Quite right;" replied the countess in as low a voice; "I suppose he has sung of kings and heroes till he cannot help assuming their step and demeanour!"—"But how did he come by those eyes?" answered the queen: "If singing of Reuther's *beamy gaze* have so richly endowed him, I may, by getting him to teach me his art, warble myself into a complexion as fair as any northern beauty!" "But then his must not be the subject of your song," whispered the countess with a laugh; "for methinks it is rather of the Ethiop hue!"

During this short dialogue, which was heard by none but the two ladies, Edward was speaking with Gloucester, and Wallace leaned upon his harp.

"That is enough;" said the King to his son-in-law; "now let me hear him play."

The earl gave the word; and Wallace, striking the chords with the master-hand of genius, called forth such strains, and uttered such tones from his divinely modulated voice, that the King listened with wonder, and the queen and countess scarcely allowed themselves to breathe. He sung the parting of Reuther and his bride, and their souls seemed to pant upon his notes; he changed his measure, and their bosoms heaved with the enthusiasm which spoke from his lips and hand; for he urged the hero to battle, he described the conflict, he mourned the slain, he sung the glorious triumph:—as the last sweep of the harp rolled its lofty diapason on the ear of the King, the monarch

deigned to pronounce him unequalled in his art. Excess of delight so agitated the more delicate frames of the ladies, that while they poured their encomiums on the minstrel, they wiped the glistening tears from their cheeks. The queen approached him, laid her hand upon the harp, and touching the strings with a light finger, said with a sweet smile—"You must remain with the King's musicians, and teach me how to charm as you do!" Wallace replied to this innocent speech with a smile, sweet as her own, and a bow.

The countess drew near. Though not much older than the youthful queen, she had been married twice; and being, therefore, more acquainted with the proprieties of life, her compliments were uttered in a form more befitting her rank, and the supposed quality of the man, to whom the queen continued to pour forth her unrestrained praises.

Edward desired Gloucester to bring the

minstrel closer to him. Wallace approached the royal couch. Edward looked at him from head to foot before he spoke. Wallace bore this eagle gaze with an undisturbed countenance: he neither withdrew his eye from the King, nor did he allow a conqueror's fire to emit from its glance.

"Who are you?" at length demanded Edward, who, surprised at the noble mien and unabashed carriage of the minstrel, conceived some suspicions of his quality. Wallace saw what was passing in the King's mind, and by frankness determining to uproot his doubts, mildly, but fearlessly answered, "A Scot." "Indeed!" said the King, satisfied that no incendiary would dare thus to proclaim himself: "And how durst you, being of that outlawed nation, venture into my court? Feared you not that you might fall a sacrifice to my indignation against the mad leader of your rebellious countrymen?" "I fear nothing on earth;" re-

plied Wallace. " This garb is privileged; none who respect the sacred law, dare commit violence on a minstrel; and against them who regard no law but that of their own wills, I have this weapon to defend me." As Wallace spoke, he pointed to a dirk which stuck in his girdle. " You are a bold man, and an honest man, I believe," replied the King; " and as my queen desires it, I order your enrolment in my travelling train of musicians. You may leave the presence."

" Then follow me to my apartment;" cried the queen: " Countess, you will accompany me, to see me take my first lesson."

A page took up the harp; and Wallace, bowing his head to the King, was conducted by Gloucester to the anti-room of the queen's apartments. The earl there told him, that when the queen dismissed him, his page would shew him the way back to Lord Carrick.

The royal Margaret herself opened the

door, so eager was she to admit her teacher; and placing herself at the harp, she attempted a passage of *The Triumph* which had particularly struck her, but she played wrong. Wallace was asked to set her right, he obeyed. She was quick; he clear in his explanations; and in less than half an hour, he made her execute the whole of that movement in a manner that delighted her. "Why, minstrel," cried she, looking him up in the face, "either your harp is enchanted, or you are a magician: I have studied three long years to play the lute, and could never bring forth any tone that did not make me ready to stop my own ears. And now, countess," cried she, again touching a few chords, "did you ever hear any thing so entrancing?—"

"I suppose," returned the countess, "all your former instructors have been dunces, and this Scot alone, knows the art to which they pretended." "Do you hear what the countess says?" ex-

claimed the queen, affecting to whisper Wallace; "she will not allow of any spiritual agency in my wonderfully awakened talent; if you can contradict her, do, for I want very much to believe in fairies, magicians, and all the enchanting world!"

Wallace, with a respectful smile, answered, "I know of no spirit that has interposed in your majesty's favour, but that of your own genius; and it is more efficient, than the agency of all fairy-land." The queen looked at him very gravely, and said, "If you really think there are no such things as fairies and enchantments, for so your words would imply, then every body in your country must have genius; for they seem to be excellent in every thing.—Your warriors are so peerlessly brave; all, excepting these Scottish lords, who are such favourites with the King! I wonder what he can see in their uncouth faces, or find in their rough indelicate conversation, to admire. If it had not been for their be-

setting my gracious Edward, I am sure he never would have suspected any ill of the noble Bruce!"—"Queen Margaret!" cried the Countess of Gloucester, giving her a look of respectful reprehension; "had not the minstrel better retire?" The queen blushed, and recollected that she was giving too free a vent to her sentiments; but she would not suffer Wallace to withdraw.

"I have yet to ask you," resumed she, "as the warriors of Scotland are so resistless, and their minstrels so perfect in their art, whether all the ladies are as dazzlingly beautiful as the Lady Helen Mar?"

The eagerness with which Wallace grasped at any tidings of her, who was so prime an object of his enterprise, at once disturbed the composure of his air; and, had the penetrating eyes of the countess been then directed towards him, she might have drawn some dangerous conclusions from the start he gave at the mention of her name, and from the heighten-

ed colour which, in spite of his exertions to suppress all evident emotion, maintained its station on his cheek. "But perhaps you have never seen her?" added the queen. Wallace replied, neither denying nor affirming her question; "I have heard many praise her beauty, but more her virtues."—"Well, I am sorry," continued her majesty, "since you sing so sweetly of female charms, that you have not seen this wonder of Scottish ladies; you have now little chance of that good fortune, for Earl de Valence has taken her abroad, intending to marry her amidst the state with which my lord has invested him." "Is it to Guienne, he has taken her?" inquired Wallace:—"Yes;" replied the queen, rather pleased, than offended, at the minstrel's ignorance of court ceremony, in thus familiarly presuming to put a question to her; "while so near Scotland, he could not win her to forget her native country and her father's danger, who it seems was dying when

De Valence carried her away. And to prevent bloodshed between the earl and Soulis, who is also madly in love with her, my ever gracious Edward gave the English lord a high post in Guienne, and thither they are gone."

Before Wallace could answer this, and some remark which the queen laughingly added to her information, the countess thought it proper to give her gay mother-in-law a more decisive reminder of decorum, and rising, she whispered something which covered the youthful Margaret with blushes. Her majesty rose directly, and pushing away the harp, said, "You may leave the room:" and turning her back to Wallace, she walked away through an opposite door.

## CHAP. VII.

WALLACE had hardly recounted the particulars of his royal visit to Bruce, (who had anxiously awaited his return, and received him with open arms,) when the page who had attended him during his interview with the queen, again appeared; and presenting him with a silk handkerchief curiously coiled up, said that he brought it from her majesty, who supposed it was his, as she found it in the room where he had been playing the harp. Wallace was going to say that it did not belong to him, when Bruce, seeing more in this than his friend did, gave him a look that directed him to take the handkerchief. Wallace, without a word, obeyed, and the boy withdrew.

Bruce smiled: "There is more in that handkerchief than silk, my friend! queens send not these embassies on trifling errands." While Bruce spoke, Wallace unwrapped it. "I told you so!" cried he, with a frank archness playing over his before pensive features, and pointing at the slip of emblazoned vellum which was now unfolded; "Shall I look aside while you peruse it?" "Look on it, my dear prince," replied Wallace, "for in trifles, as well as in things of moment, I will have but one soul with you." The vellum was then opened, and these words presented themselves:

"Presume not on condescension. This injunction may be necessary, for the noble lady who was present at our interview, tells me, the men of this island are very presuming. Reedem the character of your countrymen, and transgress not a courtesy that only means to say, I did not leave you this morning so abruptly out of unkindness. I write this, because,

always having the countess with me, I shall not even dare to whisper it in her presence. Be always faithful and respectful, minstrel, and you shall ever find an indulgent mistress.

"A page will call for you, when your attendance is desired."

Wallace and Bruce looked on each other, with no little surprise, at the contents of this billet. Bruce spoke first: "Had you vanity, my friend, this letter, from so lovely and innocent a creature, might be a gratification: but in our case, the sentiment it breathes is full of danger. She knows not the secret power that impelled her to write this, but we do. And I fear it will point an attention to you, which may produce effects ruinous to our projects."—"Then," answered Wallace, "our alternative is to escape it, by getting away this very night. And, as you persevere in your resolution not to enter Scotland unaccompanied by me, and will share my attempt to rescue Lady Helen

Mar, we must direct our course immediately to the continent."

"We should be secure under the disguise of priests;" returned Bruce: "I have in my possession the wardrobe of the confessor who followed my father's fortunes, and who, since his death, has shut himself up in the abbey which contains his remains."

It was then settled between the friends, that when it became dark, they should dress themselves in the confessor's robes; and by means of the queen's signet, which she had given to Wallace at the banquet, pass the guard as priests who had entered by some other gate, and were come from shriving her majesty. Once without the city, they would make a swift progress southward, to the first sea-port; there to embark for France; for they were well aware, that the moment they were missed, suspicion would direct pursuit towards the Scottish borders.

In these arrangements, and in planning

their future movements in relation to the rescue of Helen, they passed several hours; and were only interrupted by the arrival of a lute from the queen, for her minstrel to tune. Wallace obeyed, and returning it by the page who brought it, congratulated himself that it was not accompanied by any new summons; and continuing to discourse with Bruce on the past, present, and to come, their souls grew more closely entwined as they more intimately recognised their kindred natures; and time moved on, unmarked, till the shadows of evening deepened into night.

"Now is our hour;" cried Bruce, starting on his feet: "go you into that room, and array yourself in the confessor's robes, while I call my servants to dispense with their usual nightly attendance."—Wallace, with determination, and hope before him, gladly obeyed. At this instant the Earl of Gloucester suddenly entered, and looking around the room with

a disturbed countenance, abruptly said, "Where is the minstrel?"—"Why?" answered Bruce, with an alarm which he vainly tried to prevent appearing in his face. Gloucester advanced close to him: "Is any one within hearing?"—"No one." "Then," replied the earl, "his life is in danger. He is suspected to be, not what he seems; and, I am sorry to add, to have breathed wishes to the queen, of a nature to incur a mortal punishment."

Bruce was so confounded with this stoppage of all their plans, and at the imminent peril of Wallace, that he could not speak. Gloucester proceeded: "My dear Bruce, from the circumstance of his being with you, I cannot but suppose that you know more of him than you think proper to disclose. Whoever he may be, whether he came from France, or really from Scotland as he says, his life is now forfeited; and that you may not, by attempting to screen him, seem to share his

guilt, I come to warn you that it is fully discovered. A double guard is set around the keep; so no visible means are left for him to escape."

"Then what will become of him?" exclaimed Bruce, forgetting all caution in dismay for his friend; "am I to see the bravest of men, the saviour of my country, butchered before my eyes by a tyrant?—I may die, Gloucester, in his defence, but I will never behold him fall!"

Gloucester stood aghast at this disclosure. He came to accuse the friend of Bruce, that Bruce might be prepared to clear himself of connivance with so treasonable a crime; but now that he found this friend to be Wallace, the preserver of his own life, the restorer of his honour at Berwick, he immediately resolved to give him freedom. "Bruce," cried he, "when I recollect the figure and deportment of this minstrel, I am surprised, that in spite of his disguise, I did not recognise the invincible Regent of Scotland; but

now I know him, he shall find that generosity is not confined to his own breast. Give me your word that you will not attempt to escape the arrest in which you are now held, until the court leaves Durham, and I will instantly find a way to conduct your friend in safety from the castle."—" I pledge you my word of honour;" cried Bruce: " nay, I would swear it to you, noble Gloucester, if an oath were necessary, that before suspicion should fall on your head, I would die in chains. A child may keep me prisoner in Durham, when you release my friend." —" He saved me at Berwick," replied Gloucester, " and I am anxious to repay the debt. If he be near, explain what has happened in as few words as possible; for we must not delay a moment: I left a council with the enraged King, settling what death would be sufficiently horrible, for such a traitor to die."—" When he is safe," answered Bruce, " I will attest his innocence to you; meanwhile, rely

on my faith, that you are giving liberty to a guiltless man."

Bruce hastened to Wallace, who had just completed his disguise. He briefly related what had past; and received for answer, that he would not leave his prince to the revenge of the tyrant. But Bruce, urging that the escape of the one could alone secure that of the other, implored him not to persist in refusing his offered safety, but to make direct for Normandy. "I will join you at Rouen; whence we can proceed to Guienne;" added he: "The hour the Court leaves Durham, is that of my escape; and when free, what shall divide me from you, and your enterprise!"

Wallace had hardly assented, when a tumultuous noise broke the silence of the court-yard; the great iron doors of the keep were thrown back on their hinges, and the clangor of arms and many voices resounded in the hall. "You are lost!" exclaimed Bruce, with a cry of despair;

"but we will die together!"—At that instant Gloucester hastened into the room: "They are quicker than I thought!" cried he; "but follow me.—Bruce, remain where you are:—be bold; deny you know any thing of the minstrel, and all will be well." As he spoke, the feet of them who were come to seize Wallace, already sounded in the adjoining apartment. Gloucester turned into a short gallery, flew across it, grasping the Scottish hero by the hand, and plucking the opponent shaft of a stone pillar from under its capital, let himself and his companion into a passage within the wall of the building. The huge column closed after them, into its former situation; and the silent pair descended by a long flight of stone steps to a square dungeon without any visible outlet; but the earl found one, by raising a flat stone marked with an elevated cross; and again they penetrated lower into the bosom of the earth, by a gradually declining path, till

they found themselves on level ground. "This vaulted passage," said Gloucester, "reaches in a direct line to Fincklay abbey.(°) It was discovered to me ten years ago, as a mark of confidence, by my uncle, the then abbot of that monastery. He told me, that to none but to the bishops of Durham, and the abbots of Fincklay, was the secret of its existence ever revealed. Since my coming hither this time, (which was to escort the young queen, not to bear arms against Scotland;) I one day took it into my head to revisit this recess; and happily for the gratitude I owe to you, I found all as I had left it in my uncle's life time. But for the sake of my honour with Edward, whose wrath would fall upon me in the most fearful shapes, should he ever know that I delivered his vanquisher out of his hands, I must enjoin you to secrecy: though the enemy of my King's ambition, you are the friend of mankind. You were my benefactor, noble Wallace, and I

should deserve the rack, could I suffer one hair of your head to fall with violence to the ground."

Wallace, with answering frankness, declared his sense of the earl's generosity; and earnestly commended the young Bruce to his watchful friendship. "The brave impetuosity of his mind," continued Wallace, "at times overthrows his prudence, and leaves him exposed to dangers which a little virtuous caution might avoid. Dissimulation is a baseness, I should shudder at seeing him practise; but when the flood of indignation swells his bosom, then tell him, that I conjure him, *on the life of his dearest wishes, to be silent!* The storm which threatens, will blow over; and the power which guides through perils those who trust in it, will ordain that we shall meet again!"

Gloucester replied, "What you say, I will repeat to Bruce.—I know his claims. I am too sensible how my royal father-in-law has trampled on his rights; and should

I ever see him restored to the throne of his ancestors, I could not but acknowledge the hand of Heaven in the event. Far would it have been from me, to have bound him to remain a prisoner, during Edward's sojourn at Durham, had I not been certain, that from my acknowledged attachment to him, (should he escape at present,) my enemies would persuade the King, that I had effected his release. The result would be my disgrace; and a broken heart to her who has raised me by her generous love, from the humbler ranks of nobility, to that of a prince."

Gloucester then informed Wallace, that about two hours before he came to alarm Bruce for his safety, he was summoned by Edward to attend him immediately. When he obeyed, he found Soulis standing by the royal couch, and his Majesty talking with violence. At sight of Gloucester, he beckoned him to advance, and striking his hand fiercely on a packet he held, he exclaimed, "Here, my son,

behold the record of your father's shame! Of a King of England dishonoured by a slave!" As he spoke, he dashed the packet from him. Gloucester took it up. Soulis answered, "Not a slave, my lord and King: can you not see through the ill-adapted disguise, the figure and mien of nobility? He is some foreign lover of your bride, come—" "Enough!" interrupted the King; "I know I am dishonoured; but the villain shall die.—Read the letter, Gloucester, and say what shall be my revenge!"

Gloucester opened the vellum, and read in the queen's hand:

"Gentle minstrel! my lady countess tells me I must not see you again. Were you old or ugly, as most bards are, I might, she says; but being young, it is not for a queen to smile upon one of your calling. She bade me remember, that when I smiled, you smiled too; and that you asked me questions unbecoming your degree.—Pray do not do this any more;

though I see no harm in it, and used to smile as I liked when I was in France. Oh! if it were not for those I love best who are now in England; I wish I were there again! and you would go with me, gentle minstrel, would you not? And you would teach me to sing so sweetly! I would then never talk with you, but always speak in song,: how pretty that would be; and then we should be from under the eyes of this harsh countess. My ladies in France would let you come in, and stay as long with me as I pleased. But as I cannot go back again, I will make myself happy here in spite of the countess, who rules me more as if she were my step-mother, than I hers; but then, to be sure, she is a few years older.

"I will see you this very evening, and your sweet harp shall sing all my heart-aches to sleep. My French lady of honour will conduct you secretly to my apartments. I am sure you are too ho-

nest, even to guess at what the countess thinks you might fancy when I smile on you. She says, you must never come to me again; hence, she will never know whether I smile or frown; but this I promise you, all my smiles shall be yours—all my frowns, hers.—Gentle minstrel, presume not, and ever shall you find an indulgent mistress in M——.

"P.S. At the last vespers to-night, my page shall come for you."

Gloucester knew the queen's handwriting; and not being able to contradict that this letter was hers, he inquired how it came into his Majesty's hands. "I found it," replied Soulis, "in crossing the court-yard; it lay on the ground, where doubtless it had been accidentally dropped by the queen's messenger."

Gloucester, wishing to extenuate, for the queen's sake, whose youth and inexperience he pitied, affirmed, that from the simplicity with which the note was written; from her innocent references to

the minstrel's profession; he could not suppose that she addressed him in any other character.

"If he be only a base itinerant harper," replied the King, "the deeper is my disgrace; for, if a passion of another kind than music, be not portrayed in every word of this artful letter, I never read a woman's heart!" The King continued to comment on the fatal scroll, with the lynx eye of jealousy; and loading her name with every opprobrium; Gloucester inwardly thanked Heaven, that none other than Soulis and himself were present, to hear Edward fasten such foul dishonour on his queen. The generous earl could not find other arguments, to assuage the mounting ire of her husband. She might be innocent of actual guilt, or indeed of being aware of having conceived any wish that might lead to it; but certainly, more than a queen's usual interest in a poor wandering minstrel was, as the King said, evident in every line. Gloucester remain-

ing silent, Edward believed him convinced of the queen's crime; and being too wrathful to think of caution, he sent for the bishop and others of his lords; and when they entered, vented to them also, his injury and indignation. Many were not inclined to be of the same opinion with their sovereign; some, thought with Gloucester; others, deemed her quite innocent, that the letter was a forgery; and a few adopted the severer references of her husband: but all united, (even those determined to spare the queen,) in recommending an immediate apprehension and execution of the minstrel.—" It is not fit," cried Soulis, " that the man who has even been suspected of invading our monarch's honour, should live another hour."

This sanguinary sentence was acceded to, with as little remorse by the whole assembly, as they would have condemned a tree to the axe. Such is the carelessness with which the generality of arbitrary assemblies decide on the fate of a

fellow mortal! Earl Percy, (who had given his vote for the death of the minstrel, more from this culpable inconsideration, than that thirst of blood which stimulated the voices of Soulis and the Cummins,) proposed, as he believed the queen innocent, that the Countess of Gloucester, and the French lady of honour, should be examined relative to the circumstances mentioned in the letter.

The King immediately ordered their attendance.

The royal Jane of Acre appeared at the first summons, with an air of truth, and freedom from alarm, which convinced every one, as far as her evidence went, of the innocence of the queen. Her testimony was, that she believed the minstrel to be other than he seemed; but that she was certain, from the conversation which the queen held with her after the bishop's feast, that it was in that feast she had first seen him; and that she was ignorant of his real rank. On being questioned by

the bishop, the countess acknowledged, that her majesty had praised his figure as well as his singing; "yet not more," added she, "than she afterwards did to the King, when she awakened his curiosity to send for him." Her highness continued to reply to the interrogatories put to her, by saying, that it was in the King's presence she first saw the minstrel, and then she thought his demeanour much above his situation; but when he accompanied the queen and herself into her majesty's apartments, she had an opportunity to observe him narrowly, as the queen engaged him in conversation; and by his answers, questions, and easy, yet respectful deportment, she was convinced that he was not what he appeared.

"And why, Jane," asked the King, "did you not impart these suspicions to your husband or to me?" "Because," replied she, "remembering that my interference on a certain public occasion, brought my late husband Clare, under

your Majesty's displeasure; on my marriage with Monthermer, I made a solemn vow before my confessor, never again to offend in the like manner.—And besides, the countenance of this stranger was so ingenuous, and his sentiments so natural and honourable, that I could not suspect he came on any disloyal errand."

"Lady," asked one of the older lords, "if you thought so well of the queen and of this man, why did you caution her against her smiles; and deem it necessary to persuade her not to see him again?"

The countess blushed at this question, but replied; "Because I saw that the minstrel was a gentleman. He possessed a noble figure, and a handsome face in spite of his Egyptian skin: like most young gentlemen, he might be conscious of these advantages, and attribute the artless approbation, the innocent smiles of my gracious queen, to a source more flattering to his vanity. I have known

many lords, not far from your Majesty, make similar mistakes on as little grounds;" added she, looking disdainfully towards some of the younger nobles; "and therefore, to prevent such insolence, I desired his final dismission."

"Thank you, my dear Jane," replied the King; "you almost persuade me of Margaret's innocence." "Believe it, sire!" cried she with animation; "whatever romantic thoughtlessness, her youth and inexperience may have led her into, I pledge my life on her virtue."

"First, let us hear what that French woman has to say to the assignation?" exclaimed Soulis; whose polluted heart, could not suppose the existence of true purity; and whose cruel disposition, exulted in torturing and death; "question her; and then her majesty may have full acquittal!"

Again the brow of Edward was overcast. The fiends of jealousy once more tugged at his heart; and ordering the

Countess of Gloucester to withdraw, he commanded the Baroness de Pontoise to be brought into the presence.

When she saw the King's threatening looks, and beheld the fearful expression which shot from every surrounding countenance, she shrunk with terror. For her heart, long hackneyed in secret gallantries, from the same inward whisper which proclaimed to Soulis that the queen was guilty, could not believe but that it had been the confident of an illicit passion; and therefore, though she knew nothing really bad of her unhappy mistress, yet, fancying that she did, she stood before the royal tribunal with the air and aspect of a culprit.

"Repeat to me," demanded the King, "or answer it with your head, all that you know of Queen Margaret's intimacy with the man who calls himself a minstrel."

The French-woman, at these words, which were delivered in a tone that

seemed the sentence of her death, fell on her knees, and in a burst of terror exclaimed, " Sire, I will reveal all—if your Majesty will grant me a pardon, for having too faithfully served my mistress!"

" Speak! speak!" cried the King with desperate impatience; " I swear to pardon you, even if you have joined in a conspiracy against my life; but speak the truth, and all the truth, that judgment, without mercy, may fall on the guilty heads!"

" Then I obey:" answered the baroness.—" Foul betrayer!" half-exclaimed Gloucester, turning disappointed away; " O! what it is to be vile, and to trust the vile!—But virtue will not be auxiliary to vice—and so wickedness falls by its own agents!"

The baroness, being raised from her kneeling position by Soulis, began:

" The only time I ever heard of, or saw this man to my knowledge, was when he was brought to play before my lady at the

bishop's banquet; I did not much observe him, being engaged in conversation at the other end of the room, so I cannot say whether I might not have seen him in France; for many noble lords adored the Princess Margaret, though she appeared to frown upon them all. But I must confess, that when I attended her majesty's disrobing after the feast, she put to me so many questions about what I thought of the minstrel who had sung and played so divinely, that I began to think her admiration too great to have been awakened by a mere song. And then she asked me, if a king could have a nobler air than he had; and she laughed, and said, she would send your Majesty to school to learn of him."

"Damnable traitoress!" exclaimed the King.—The baroness paused, and retreated from before the sudden fury which flashed from his eyes.—"Go on!" cried he; "hide neither word, nor circum-

stance, that my vengeance may lose nothing of its aim!"

She proceeded: "Her majesty then talked of his beautiful eyes; so blue, she said, so tender, yet proud in their looks; and only a minstrel! 'De Pontoise,' added she, 'can you explain that?' 'I, being rather, perhaps, too well learned in the idle tales of our troubadours, heedlessly answered, 'Perhaps he is some king in disguise; just come to look at your charms, and go away again!' She laughed much at this conceit; said, he must be one of Pharaoh's race, then, and that had he not such white teeth his complexion would be intolerable. I, being pleased to see her majesty in such spirits, thinking no ill, and being in a rallying mood, answered, 'I read once of a certain Spanish lover, who went to the court of Tunis to carry off the king's daughter; and he had so black a face, that none suspected him to be other than the Moorish prince

of Granada; when, lo! and behold! one day in a pleasure party on the sea, he fell overboard, and came up with the fairest face in the world, and presently acknowledged himself to be the christian King of Castile!' The queen laughed at this story, but not answering me, went to bed.—Next morning when I entered her chamber, she received me with even more gaiety, and putting aside my hair under my coiffure, said, 'Let me see if I can find the devil's mark here!' 'What is the matter?' I asked: 'does your majesty take me for a witch?' 'Exactly so,' she replied, 'for a little sprite told me last night, that all you said was true.' And then she began to tell me, with many smiles, that she had dreamt that the minstrel was the very prince of Portugal whom, unseen, she had refused for the King of England, and that he gave her a harp set with jewels. She then went to your Majesty; and I saw no more of her, till she sent for me late in the evening.

She seemed very angry.—' You are faithful,' said she to me, ' and you know me, De Pontoise; you know me too proud to degrade myself, and too high-minded to submit to tyranny. The Countess of Gloucester, with persuasions too much like commands, will not allow me to see the minstrel any more.' She then declared her determination that she would see him; that she would feign herself sick, and he should come and sing to her when she was alone; and that she was sure he was too modest to presume on her condescension. I said something to dissuade her, but she over-ruled me; and, shame to myself, I consented to assist her.—She embraced me, and gave me a letter to convey to him; which I did, by slipping it beneath the ornaments of the handle of her lute, which I sent as an excuse for the minstrel to tune.—It was to acquaint him with her intentions; and this night he was to have visited her apartments."

It was immediately apprehended by the council that this was the letter which Soulis found.

"And is this all you know of the affair?" inquired Percy, seeing that she made a pause. "And enough too!" cried Soulis, "to blast the most vaunted chastity in Christendom."

"Take the woman hence;" cried the King; "send her to France, and never let me see her face more!" The baroness withdrew in terror; and Edward, calling Sir Piers Gaveston, told him, to place himself at the head of a double guard, and go in person to bring the object of his officious introduction, to meet the punishment due to his crime: "For," cried the King, "be he prince or peasant, I will see him hanged before my eyes; and then, return his wanton paramour, branded with infamy, to her disgraced family!"

Soulis now suggested, that as the delinquent was to be found with Bruce, most

likely that young nobleman was privy to his designs.—"We shall see to him hereafter," replied the King; "meanwhile look that I am obeyed."

The moment this order passed the King's lips, Gloucester, now not doubting the queen's guilt, hastened to warn Bruce of what had passed, that he might separate himself from the crime of the man he had protected; but finding that the accused was no other than the universally feared, universally beloved and generous Wallace, all other considerations were lost in the desire of delivering him from the impending danger. He knew the means, and he did not hesitate to employ them.

During the recital of this narrative, Gloucester narrowly observed his auditor; and by the ingenuous bursts of his indignation, and the horror he evinced at the crime he was suspected of having committed, the earl was fully convinced that the noble Scot had not possessed one wish with regard to the queen, which angels

might not have registered. This ascertained, he now saw that her sentiments of him had not gone farther than a childish admiration, easily to be pardoned in an innocent creature hardly more than sixteen.

"See," cried Wallace, "the power which lies with the describer of actions! The chaste mind of your countess, saw nothing in the conduct of the queen but thoughtless simplicity. The contaminated heart of the Baroness de Pontoise, descried passion in every word, wantonness in every movement; and judging of her mistress by herself, she has wrought this mighty ruin. How then does it behove virtue, to admit the virtuous only to her intimacy; association with the vicious, make her to be seen in their own colours! Impress your King with this self-evident conclusion: and, were it not for endangering the safety of Bruce, the hope of my country, I myself would return, and stake my life on proving the inno-

cence of the Queen of England.—But if a letter, with my word of honour, could convince the King—"

"I accept the offer," interrupted Gloucester; "I am too warmly the friend of Bruce; too truly grateful to you, to betray either into danger; but from Sunderland, whither I recommend you to go, and to embark for some French port, write the declaration you mention, and enclose it to me. I will contrive that the King shall have your letter, without suspecting by what channel; and then I trust all will be well."

During this discourse, they passed on through the vaulted passage, till arriving at a wooden crucifix which marked the boundary of the domain of Durham, Gloucester stopped:—"I must not go farther.—Should I prolong my stay from the castle, during the search for you, suspicion may be awakened.—You must, therefore, proceed alone.—Go straight forward, and at the extremity of the vault

you will find a flag-stone, surmounted like the one by which we descended; raise it; and it will let you into the cemetery of the abbey of Fincklay. One end of this burying-place, for some religious reason that I do not understand, is always open to the east. Thence you may emerge to the open world; and may it, in future, noble Wallace, treat you ever according to your unequalled merits. Farewel!"

Wallace bade him adieu with similar expressions of esteem; and having exchanged the warm embrace of friendship, the earl turned to retrace his steps; and Wallace pursued his way, alone, through the rayless darkness, towards the Fincklay extremity of the vault.

## CHAP. VIII.

WALLACE having emerged from his subterranean journey, made direct to Sunderland, and arrived there about sunrise. A vessel belonging to France (which, since the marriage of Margaret with Edward, had been at amity with England as well as Scotland) was there, waiting a favourable wind for Dieppe. Wallace secured a passage in her; and going on board, wrote his promised letter to Edward.—It ran thus:

"This testimony, signed by my hand, is to assure Edward, King of England, upon the word of a knight, that Margaret, Queen of England, is in every respect guiltless of the crimes alledged against her by the Lord Soulis, and sworn to by the Baroness de Pontoise. I came to the

court of Durham on an errand connected with my country; and that I might be unknown, I assumed the disguise of a minstrel. By accident I encountered Sir Piers Gaveston, and ignorant that I was other than I seemed, he introduced me at the royal banquet. It was there I first saw her majesty.—And I never had that honour but three times: one I have named; the second was in your presence; and the third and last, in her apartments, to which you yourself saw me withdraw. The Countess of Gloucester was present the whole time; and to her highness I appeal. The queen saw in me only a minstrel: on my art alone as a musician was her favour bestowed; and by expressing it with an ingenuous warmth, which none other than an innocent heart would have dared display, she has thus exposed herself to the animadversions of libertinism, and to the false representations of a terror-struck, because worthless, friend.

"I have escaped the snare which the queen's enemies laid for me:—and for her sake, for the sake of truth, and your own peace, King Edward, I declare before the Searcher of all Hearts, and before the world, in whose esteem I hope to live and die; That your wife is innocent! And should I ever meet the man who, after this declaration, dares to unite her name to mine in a tale of infamy,—by the power of truth I swear, that I will make him write a recantation with his blood. Pure as a virgin's chastity is, and shall ever be, the honour of William Wallace."

This letter, was enclosed in one to the Earl of Gloucester; and having dispatched his packet to Durham, he gladly saw a brisk wind blow up from the north-west. The ship weighed anchor, cleared the harbour, and under a fair sky, swiftly cut the waves towards the Norman shores. But ere she reached them, the warlike star of Wallace, which still pre-

vailed, directed to his little barque, the terrific sails of the Red Reaver, (P) a formidable pirate, who then infesting the Gallic seas, swept their commerce and insulted their navy. He attacked the French vessel; but it carried a greater than *Cesar and his fortunes:* Wallace and his destiny were there—and the enemy struck to the Scottish chief. The Red Reaver, (so surnamed because of his red sails and sanguinary deeds,) was killed in the action; but his young brother, Thomas de Longueville, was found alive within the captive ship; and to the astonishment of Wallace, also Prince Louis of France, who, having been out the day before on a sailing party, had been descried, and seized, as an invaluable prize, by the Red Reaver.

Adverse winds, for some time prevented Wallace from reaching port with his capture; but on the fourth day after the victory, he cast anchor in the harbour of Dieppe. The indisposition of the

prince, from a wound he had received in his own conflict with the Reaver, made it necessary to apprize King Philip of the accident.—In answer to Wallace's dispatches on this subject, the grateful monarch added to the proffers of personal friendship, which had been the substance of his embassy to Scotland, a pressing invitation that he would immediately accompany the prince to Paris; and there receive a mark of royal gratitude, that should record his service done to France, with due honour, to future ages. Meanwhile, Philip sent him a suit of armour, with a request that he would wear it in remembrance of France and his own heroism. But no offers of aggrandizement, could tempt Wallace from his duty. Impatient to pursue his journey towards the spot, where he hoped to meet Bruce, (whose interest was now so united with Scotland, that in serving one, he still proved his love for the other,) he wrote a respectful excuse to the King:

and arraying himself in the monarch's martial present, (to convince him, by the evidence of his son, that he had so far obeyed the royal wish,) he joined the prince to bid him farewel. Louis was accompanied by young De Longueville, (whose pardon Wallace had obtained from the King, on account of the youth's abhorrence to the use which his brother had compelled him to make of his brave arm:)—and the two, from different feelings, expressed their disappointment when they found that their benefactor was going to leave them. Wallace gave his highness a packet for the King, containing a brief statement of his vow to Lord Mar, and his promise, that when he had fulfilled it, Philip should see him at Paris. The royal cavalcade then separated from the deliverer of its prince; and Wallace mounting a richly barbed Arabian which had accompanied his splendid armour, took the road to Rouen.

MEANWHILE, events, not less momentous, took place at Durham. The instant Wallace had followed the Earl of Gloucester from the apartment in the castle, it was entered by Sir Piers Gaveston. He demanded the minstrel. Bruce replied, he knew not where he was. Gaveston, anxious to convince the King that he was no accomplice with the suspected person, again addressed Bruce, in a tone, which he meant should intimidate him; and, a second time put the question, "Where is the minstrel?"—"I know not," replied Bruce. "And will you dare to tell me, earl," asked he, "that within this quarter of an hour he has not been in this tower? nay, in this very room?—The guards in your antichamber have told me that he was:—and can Lord Carrick stoop to utter falsehood to screen a wandering beggar?"

While he was speaking, Bruce stood eyeing him with increasing scorn. Gaveston paused:—"You expect me to answer you;" said the prince: "out of respect to myself, I will; for such is the unsullied honour of Robert Bruce, that even the air shall not be tainted with slander against his truth, without being re-purified by its confutation. Gaveston, you have known me five years: two of them, we past together in the jousts of Flanders, and yet you believe me capable of falsehood! Know then, unworthy of the esteem I have bestowed on you! that, neither to save mean nor great, would I deviate from the strict line of truth. The man you seek, may have been in this tower, in this room, as you at present are; and as little am I bound to know where he now is, as whither you go, when you relieve me from an inquisition, which I hold myself accountable to no man to answer."——"'Tis well;" cried Gaveston; "and I am to carry this

haughty message to the King?"——"If you deliver it as a message," answered Bruce, "you will prove, that they who are ready to suspect falsehood, find its utterance easy. My reply is to you. When King Edward speaks to me, I shall find the answer that is due to him."——"These attempts, to provoke me into a private quarrel," cried Gaveston, "will not succeed. I am not to be so foiled from my duty. I must seek the man throughout your apartments."——"By whose authority?" demanded Bruce.——"By my own, as the loyal subject of my outraged monarch. He bade me bring the traitor before him, and thus I obey." As Gaveston spoke, he beckoned to his men to follow him to the door whence Wallace had disappeared. Bruce threw himself before it: "I must forget the duty I owe to myself, before I allow you, or any other man, to invade my privacy. I have already given you the answer that becomes Robert Bruce; and

in respect to your being a knight, instead of compelling, I request you to withdraw." Gaveston hesitated: but he knew the determined character of his opponent; and therefore, with no very good grace, muttering that he should hear of it from a more powerful quarter, he left the room.

And certainly his threats were not in this instance vain; for, in the course of a few minutes, a marshal, attended by a numerous retinue, made his appearance, to force Bruce before the King.

"Robert Bruce, Earl of Cleveland, Carrick, and Annandale, I come to summon you into the presence of your liege lord Edward of England."

"The Earl of Cleveland obeys;" said he; and with a fearless step he walked out before the marshal.

When he entered the presence-chamber, Sir Piers Gaveston stood beside the royal couch, as if prepared to be his accuser. The King sat, supported by pillows,

paler with the mortifications of jealousy and baffled authority, than by the effects of his wounds.—" Robert Bruce!" cried he, the moment his eyes fell on him;—but the sight of his mourning habit, made a stroke upon his heart, that sent out drops of shame in large globules on his forehead;—he paused, wiped his face with his handkerchief, and resumed—" Are you not afraid, presumptuous young man, thus to provoke your sovereign? Are you not afraid, that I shall make that audacious head, answer for the man whom you thus dare to screen from my just revenge?" Bruce felt the many injuries he had suffered from this proud king, rush at once upon his memory; and without changing his position, or lowering the lofty expression of his looks, he firmly answered—" The judgment of a just king I cannot fear; the sentence of an unjust one, I despise."——" This to his Majesty's face?" exclaimed Soulis.——" Insolence—Rebellion—Chastisement—even

death!" were the words which murmured round the room, at the honest reply. Edward had too much good sense to echo any one of them; but turning to Bruce, with a sensation of shame he would gladly have repressed, he said, that in consideration of his youth, he would pardon him what had passed, and reinstate him in all the late Earl of Carrick's honours, if he would immediately declare where he had hidden the offending minstrel. "I have not hidden him," cried Bruce; "nor do I know where he is: but had that been confided to me, as I know him to be an innocent man, no power on earth should have wrenched him from me!"

"Self-sufficient boy!" exclaimed Earl Buchan, with a laugh of contempt; "do you flatter yourself that he would trust such a novice as you are, with secrets of this nature?" Bruce turned on him an eye of fire.—"Buchan," replied he, "I will answer you on other ground. Meanwhile remember, that the secrets of good

men are open to every virtuous heart; those of the wicked, they would be glad to conceal even from themselves."

"Robert Bruce," cried the King, "before I came this northern journey, I ever found you one of the most devoted of my servants; the gentlest youth in my court; and how do I see you at this moment? Braving my nobles to my face! How is it, that until now, this spirit never broke forth?" "Because," answered the prince, "until now, I had never seen the virtuous friend, whom you call upon me to betray." "Then you confess," cried the King, "that he was an instigator to rebellion?" "I avow," answered Bruce, "that I never knew what true loyalty was, till he taught it me; I never knew the nature of real chastity, till he explained it to me; and allowed me to see in himself, incorruptible fidelity, bravery undaunted, and a purity of heart not to be contaminated! And this is the man, on whom these lords, would fasten a charge

of treason and adultery! But out of the filthy depths of their own breasts, arise the steams with which they would blacken his fairness."

"Your vindication," cried the King, "confirms his guilt.—You admit, that he is not a minstrel in reality.—Wherefore, then, did he steal in ambuscade into my palace, but to betray either my honour or my life, perhaps both?" "His errand here, was to see me." "Rash, boy!" cried Edward; "then you acknowledge yourself a premeditated conspirator against me?" Soulis now whispered in the King's ear, but so low that Bruce did not hear him; "Penetrate farther, my liege; this may be only a false confession, to shield the queen's character. She who has once betrayed her duty, finds it easy to reward such handsome advocates." The scarlet of inextinguishable wrath now burnt on the face of Edward.—"I will confront them," thought he, "and surprise them into betraying each other."

By his orders the queen was brought in, supported by the Countess of Gloucester. "Jane," cried the King, "leave that woman; let her impudence sustain her." "Rather her innocence, my lord;" said the countess bowing, and hesitating to obey. "Leave her to that," returned the incensed husband, "and she would grovel on the earth, like her own base passions: but stand before me she shall; and without other support than the devil's within her." "For pity!" cried the queen, extending her clasped hands towards Edward, and bursting into tears; "have mercy on me, for I am innocent!" "Prove it then," cried the King, "by agreeing with this confident of your minstrel, and at once tell me, by what name you addressed him when you allured him to my court? Is he French, Spanish, or English?" "By the Virgin's holy purity I swear!" cried the queen, sinking on her knees, "that I never allured him to this court;—I never beheld him, till I saw him

at the bishop's banquet; and for his name, I know it not." "O! vilest of the vile!" cried the King, in a paroxysm of fury, fiercely grasping a sword, which lay on his couch; "and didst thou become a wanton at a glance?—From my sight this moment, or I shall blast thee!"

The queen fainted, and dropt senseless into the arms of the Earl of Gloucester, who, at that moment entered from seeing Wallace through the cavern. At sight of him, Bruce knew that his friend was safe; and fearless for himself, when the cause of outraged innocence was at stake, he suddenly exclaimed, "By one word, King Edward, I will confirm the blamelessness of this injured queen. Listen to me, not as a monarch, and an enemy, but with the unbiassed judgment of man with man;—and then ask your own brave heart, if it would be possible for Sir William Wallace to be a seducer?"

Every mouth was dumb at the enunciation of that name. None dared open a

lip in accusation; and the King himself, thunder-struck, alike with the boldness of his conqueror venturing within the grasp of his revenge, and at the daringness of Bruce in thus declaring his connexion with him; for a few minutes knew not what to answer: only, he had received conviction of his wife's innocence! He was too well acquainted with the history and uniform conduct of Wallace, to doubt his honour in this transaction; and though a transient fancy of the queen's might have had existence, yet he had now no suspicion of her actions. "Bruce," said he, "your honesty has saved the Queen of England. Though Wallace is my enemy, I know him to be of an integrity which neither man nor woman can shake; and therefore," added he, turning to the lords, "I declare before all who have heard me so fiercely arraign my injured wife, that I believe her innocent of every offence against me. And whoever, after this, mentions one word

of what has passed in these investigations, or even whispers that they ever have been held, shall be punished as guilty of high treason."

Bruce was then ordered to be re-conducted to the round tower; and the rest of the lords withdrawing by command, the King was left with Gloucester, his daughter Jane, and the now reviving queen, to make his peace with her, even on his knees.

Bruce was more closely immured than ever. Not even his senachie was allowed to approach him, and double guards were kept constantly around his prison. On the fourth day of his seclusion, an extra row of iron bars was put across his windows. He asked the captain of the party, the reason of this new rivet on his captivity, but he received no answer. His own recollection, however, solved the doubt; for he could not but see that his declaration respecting his friendship with Wallace, had so alarmed Edward, that

he now meant no other termination to this confinement, than that of death. One of the sentinels, on having the same inquiry put to him, which Bruce had addressed to his superior, in a rough tone told him, "he had best not ask too many questions, lest he should hear that his Majesty had determined to keep him under Bishop Beck's padlock for life." Bruce was not to be deprived of hope by a single evidence, and smiling, said—"There are more ways of getting out of a tyrant's prison, than by the doors and windows!"—"Why, you would not eat through the walls!" cried the man. "Certainly," replied Bruce, "if I have no other way; and through the guards too."——"We'll see to that," answered the man. "And feel it too, my sturdy soldier;" returned the prince; "so look to yourself." Bruce threw himself carelessly into a chair as he spoke; and the man eyeing him askance, and remembering how strangely the minstrel had disappeared, began to think that

people born in Scotland, inherited from nature, some necromantic power of executing whatever they determined. "And I am determined," muttered he to himself; "never again to take this guard, while a Scottish lord remains in the castle!"

Bruce, though careless in his manner of treating the soldier's information, thought of it with some degree of anxiety; and lost in reflections, chequered with hope and doubts of his ever effecting his escape from such an iron prison, he remained immoveable on the spot where the man had left him, till another sentinel brought in his lamp. He set it down in silence, and withdrew: Bruce then heard the bolts, on the outside of his chamber, pushed into their guards.—"There they go!" said he to himself; "and those are to be the morning and evening sounds, to which I am to listen all my days! At least Edward would have it so. Such is the gratitude he shews

to the man who restored to him his wife; who restored to him, the consciousness of yet possessing that unsullied honour, which is so dear to every married man!—Well, Edward; kindness might bind generous minds, even to forget their rights; but thanks to you, neither in my own person, nor for any of my name, do I owe you aught, but to behold me King of Scotland! and, please God, that you shall; if the prayers of faith, may burst these double steeled gates, and set me free!"

While invocations to the power in which he confided, and resolutions respecting the consequences of his hoped for liberty, by turns occupied his mind, he heard the tread of a foot in the adjoining passage. He listened, breathless; for no living creature, he thought, could be in that quarter of the building, as he had suffered none to enter it, since, by it, Wallace had disappeared. He half rose from his couch, as the door at which

he had seen him last, gently opened. He started up, and Gloucester, with a lantern in his hand, stood before him. The earl put his finger on his lip, and taking Bruce by the hand, led him, as he had done Wallace, down into the vault which leads to Fincklay abbey.

When safe in that subterraneous cloister, with the entrance firmly secured behim them, the earl replied to the impatient gratitude of Bruce, (who saw that the generous Gloucester meant he should follow the steps of his friend;) by giving him a succinct account of his motives, for changing his first determination, and now giving him liberty. He had not visited Bruce since the escape of Wallace, that he might not excite any new suspicion in Edward; and the tower being fast locked at every usual avenue, he had now entered it from the Fincklay side. He then proceeded to inform Bruce, that after his magnanimous forgetfulness of his own safety, to ensure that of the queen, had

produced a reconciliation between her and her husband, Lord Buchan, Soulis, and Athol, and one or two English lords, joined next day to persuade the King, that Bruce's avowal respecting Wallace, had been merely an invention of his own, to screen some baser friend and his royal mistress. They succeeded in re-awakening some doubts in Edward, who, sending for Gloucester, said to him, "Unless I could hear from Wallace's own lips, and (that in my case is impossible,) that he has been here, and that my wife is guiltless of this foul stain, I must ever remain in horrible suspense. These cruel Scots, ever fertile in maddening suggestions, have made me even suspect that Bruce had other reasons for his apparently generous risk of himself, than a love of justice."

While these ideas floated in the mind of Edward, Bruce was more closely immured. And Gloucester having received the promised letter from Wallace, determined to

lay it before the King. Accordingly, on the first opportunity, the earl, one morning, stole unobserved into the presence-chamber, before Edward was brought in. He laid the letter under his Majesty's cushion. As Gloucester expected, the moment the King saw the superscription, he knew the hand; and hastily breaking the seal, read the letter twice over to himself, without speaking a word. But the clouds which had hung on his countenance, all passed away; and with a smile reaching the packet to Gloucester, he commanded him to read aloud, that silencer of all doubts respecting the honour of the queen. Gloucester obeyed:—and the astonished nobles, looking on each other, one and all assented to the credit that was to be given to Wallace's word; and deeply regretted, having ever joined in a suspicion against her majesty.—Thus then all appeared amicably settled. But the embers of discord still glowed. The three Scottish lords, afraid that Bruce would

again be taken into favour, laboured to shew that his friendship with Wallace pointed to his throwing off the English yoke and independently assuming the Scottish crown. Edward required no arguments to convince him of the probability of all this; and readily complied with Bishop Beck's request, to allow him to hold the royal youth his prisoner. But while the Cummins won this victory over Bruce, they gained nothing for themselves. They had ventured, during the King's vain inquiries respecting the manner in which Wallace's letter had been conveyed to his apartment, to throw out some hints of Bruce having been the agent by some secret means; and that he, however innocent the queen might be, certainly, by such solicitude for her exculpation, evinced an interest in her person which might prove dangerous. These latter innuendos, the King crushed in the first whisper. "I have done enough with Robert Bruce;" said he; "he is con-

demned a prisoner for life; and mere suspicion shall never provoke me to give sentence for his death." Irritated with this reply, and the contemptuous glance with which it was accompanied, the vindictive triumvirate, turned from the King to his court; and having failed in compassing the destruction of Bruce, and his more renowned friend, they determined, at least to make a wreck of their moral fame. The guilt of Wallace and the queen, and the participation of Bruce, were now whispered through every circle; and credited in proportion to the evil dispositions of the hearers.

One of his pages, at last brought to the ears of the King, the stories which these lords so busily circulated; and sending for them, he gave them so severe a reprimand, that retiring from his presence in stifled wrath, they determined to accept the invitation of young Lord Badenoch, return to their country, and support him in the regency. Next morning,

Edward was informed that they had secretly left Durham, with all their followers; and fearing that Bruce might also make his escape, a consultation was held between the King and Beck, of so threatening a complexion, that Gloucester no longer hesitated to run all risks, and immediately give the Scottish prince his liberty.

Impelled by these sentiments, Gloucester led Bruce in safety through the vaulted passage; and taking an affectionate leave of him, they parted in the cemetery of Fincklay; Gloucester, to walk back to Durham by the banks of the Wear; and Bruce, to mount the horse the good earl had prepared, and left tied to a tree, to convey him to Hartlepool. There he embarked for Normandy. When he arrived at Caen, he did not delay; but pursuing his way across the country towards Rouen, on the second evening of his travelling, having pursued his route hitherto without sleep, he felt himself so

overcome with fatigue, in the midst of a vast solitary plain, that he determined to stop for rest at the first habitation he should find. It happened to be the abode of one of those poor but pious matrons, who, attaching themselves to some neighbouring order of charity, live alone in desert places, for the purpose of succouring distressed travellers. Here, Bruce found the widow's cruse; and a pallet, to repose his wearied limbs.

## CHAP. IX.

WALLACE, having separated from the Prince Royal of France, pursued his way towards the capital of Normandy, till night overtook him ere he was aware. Clouds so obscured the sky, that not a

star was visible; and his horse, terrified at the impenetrable darkness, and the difficulties of the path, which was over a barren and stony moor, suddenly stopped. This aroused Wallace from his long fit of musing, to look around him. But on which side lay the road to Rouen, he could form no guess. To pass the night in so dreary a spot, might be dangerous; and spurring his animal, he determined to push onward.

He had ridden nearly an hour, when the dead silence of the scene was broken by the roll of distant thunder. Forked lightning shot from the horizon, and shewed a line, unmarked by any vestige of human habitation. Still he proceeded. The storm approached, and breaking in peals over his head, discharged such sheets of livid fire at his feet that the horse reared, and plunging amidst the blaze, flashed the light of his armour, and that of his rider's, on the eyes of a troop of horsemen who stood under the tempest, gazing

with affright at the scene. Wallace, by the same transitory illumination, saw the travellers as they seemed to start back at his appearance; and mistaking their apprehension, he called to them, that his well-managed, though terrified steed, should do them no hurt. One of them advanced, and respectfully inquired of him the way to Rouen. Wallace replied, that he was a stranger in this part of the country; but as he also, was seeking that city, he would render them every assistance in his power to find the path. While he was yet speaking, the thunder became more tremendous; and the lightning, seeming to roll in volumes along the ground, the horses of the troop became restive, and one of them throwing its rider, galloped away, across the plain. Cries of terror, mingled with the groans of the fallen person, excited the compassion of Wallace: he rode towards the spot whence the latter proceeded, and asked the nearest by-stander (for several had

alighted,) whether his friend were much hurt? The man returned an answer full of alarm for the sufferer, and anxiety to obtain some place of shelter; for rain began to fall. In a few minutes it increased to torrents, and the lightning ceasing, deepened the horrors of the scene, by preventing the likelihood of discovering any human abode. The poor men, gathered around their fallen companion, bewailing the prospect of his perishing under these inclemencies; but Wallace cheered them, by saying, he would seek a shelter for their friend, and blow his bugle when he had found one. As he spoke, he turned his horse, and called aloud, as he galloped along, for any christian man who might live near, to open his doors to a dying traveller! After riding about in all directions, during a time that seemed to him an age, while a suffering fellow-creature was lying exposed to the increasing torrent, he saw a glimmering light for a moment, and then all was dark-

ness; but again he cried aloud for charity, and a shrill female voice answered, "I am a lone woman, with already one poor traveller in my house; but for the Virgin's sake, I will open my door to you, whatever you may be." The good woman re-lit her lamp, which the rain had extinguished, and unlatching her door, Wallace briefly related what had happened, and entreated permission to bring the unfortunate invalid to her cottage. She readily consented; and giving him a lantern to guide his way, he blew his bugle; and was answered by so glad and loud a shout, that it assured him his companions could not be far distant; and that he must have made many an useless circuit, before he had stopped at this charitable door.

The men directed him through the darkness by their voices, for the lantern threw its beams but a very little way; and arriving at their side, by his assistance the bruised traveller, whom they said was

their master, was brought to the cottage. It was a poor hovel: but the good woman had spread a clean woollen coverlid over her own bed in the inner chamber, and thither Wallace carried the invalid and laid him on the humble pallet. He seemed in great pain, but his kind conductor answered their hostess's inquiries respecting him, that he believed no bones were broken. "But yet," cried she, "sad may be the effects of internal bruises on so emaciated a frame. I will venture to disturb my other guest, who sleeps in the loft, and bring down a decoction that I keep there. It is made from simple herbs, and I am sure will be of service."

The old woman, having shewed to the attendants where they might put their horses under shelter of a shed which projected from the cottage, ascended a few steps to the chamber above. Meanwhile the Scottish chief, assisted by the man, who had been the spokesman of the troop, disengaged the sufferer from his wet gar-

ments, and covered him with the blankets of the bed. Recovered to recollection by the comparative comfort of his bodily feelings, the stranger opened his eyes. He fixed them on Wallace, then looked around, and turned to Wallace again. "Generous knight!" cried he, "I have nothing but thanks to offer for this kindness. You seem to be of the highest rank, and yet have succoured one whom the world abjures! have shewn charity to the poorest, most degraded of men!" The knight returned a courteous answer, and the invalid in a paroxysm of emotion, added, "Can it be possible that a prince of France, has dared to act thus contrary to his peers!"

Wallace, not apprehending what had given rise to this question, supposed the stranger's wits were disordered; and looked with that inquiry towards the attendant just at the moment when a step more active than that of their aged hostess, sounded above; an exclamation of

surprise, accompanied it, in a voice that startled Wallace.—He turned hastily round.—The door flew open, and a young man sprang from the cottage stairs into the apartment; joy danced in every feature; and the ejaculations, *Wallace!—Bruce!*—burst at once from the hearts of the two friends, as they rushed into each others arms. All present, were lost to them in the delight of meeting after so perilous a separation; a delight, not confined, for its object, to their individual selves; each saw in the other the hope of Scotland; and when they embraced, it was not merely with the ardour of friendship, but with that of patriotism, rejoicing in the preservation of its chief dependance. While the chiefs, in their native tongue, freely spoke before a people, who could not be supposed to understand them, the aged stranger on the bed reiterated his moans. Wallace, in a few words, telling Bruce the manner of his rencontre with the sick man, and

his belief that he was disordered in his mind, drew towards the bed, and offered him some of the decoction which the woman now brought. The invalid drank it, and looked earnestly, first on Wallace, and then on Bruce. "Pierre, withdraw," cried he to his attendant.—The man obeyed. "Sit down by me, noble friends," said he to the Scottish chiefs, "and read a lesson, which I pray ye lay to your hearts!" Bruce glanced a look at Wallace, that declared, he was of his opinion. Wallace drew a stool, while his friend seated himself on the bed.—The old woman, perceiving something extraordinary in the countenance of the bruised stranger, thought he was going to reveal some secret heavy on his mind, and out of delicacy withdrew.

"You think that my intellects are injured," said he, turning to Wallace, "because I addressed you as one of the house of Philip! Those jewelled lilies round your helmet, led me into the error. I

never before saw them granted to other than a prince of the blood. But think not, brave man, I respect you less since I have discovered that you are not of the race of Philip, that you are other than a prince!—Look on me, at this emaciated form, and behold the reverses of all earthly grandeur! This palsied hand, once held a sceptre; these hollow temples, were once bound with a crown!—He that used to be followed as the source of honour, as the fountain of prosperity, with suppliants at his feet and flatterers at his side, would now be left to solitude, were it not for these few faithful old servants, who, in spite of all changes, have preserved their allegiance to the end. Look on me, chiefs, and behold him who was the King of Scots."

Both Wallace and Bruce, at this declaration, struck with surprise and compassion at meeting their ancient enemy reduced to such abject misery, with one impulse bowed their heads to him with an

air of reverence, they would have started from, had he been still the minion of Edward. The action penetrated the heart of Baliol: for when, at the mutual exclamation of the two friends, on their first meeting in the chamber, he recognised in whose presence he lay, he fearfully remembered, that by his base submissions turning the scale of judgment in his favour, he had defrauded the grandsire of the very Bruce now before him, of a fair decision on his rights to the crown! and when he looked on Wallace, who had preserved him from the effects of his accident, and brought him to a shelter from the raging terrors of the night, his conscience doubly smote him; for, from the hour of his elevation, to that of his downfal, he had ever persecuted the family of Wallace; and at an hour momentous for Scotland, had denied them the right of drawing their swords in the defence of Scotland.—He, her king, had resigned all into the hands of an usurper: but Wal-

lace, the injured Wallace, had arisen, like a star of light, on the deep darkness of her captivity, and Scotland was once more free! In the tempest, the exiled monarch had started at the blaze of the unknown knight's jewelled panoply: at the declaration of his name, he shrunk before the brightness of his glory—and falling back on the bed, groaned aloud. To these young men, so strangely brought before him, and both of whom he had wronged, he determined immediately to reveal himself; and see, whether they were equally resentful of injuries, as those he had served were ungrateful for benefits received. He spoke: and when, instead of seeing the pair rise in indignation on his pronouncing his name, they bowed their heads, and sat listening in respectful silence; his desolate heart expanded at once to admit the long-estranged emotion of pleasure, and he burst into tears. He caught the hand of Bruce, who sat nearest to him; and stretching out the other

to Wallace, exclaimed, " I have not deserved this goodness from either of you. Perhaps you two are the only men now living, whom I ever greatly injured; and you, excepting my four poor attendants, are perhaps the only men existing, who would compassionate my misfortunes!"

" These are lessons, king," returned Wallace in a respectful tone of voice, " to fit you for a better crown, than the one you so lately wore. And never, in my eyes, did the descendant of Alexander seem so worthy of his blood!"—The grateful monarch pressed his hand.—Bruce continued to gaze on him with a thousand awful thoughts occupying his mind. Baliol read in his expressive countenance, the reflections which chained his tongue. " Behold, how low is laid the proud rival of your grandfather!" exclaimed he, turning to Bruce. " I compassed a throne I could not fill.—I mistook the robes, the homage, for the kingly dignity. Ignorant of the duties I was

called upon to perform, I left them all undone. I bartered the liberties of my country, for a crown I knew not how to wear; and the insidious trafficker, not only reclaimed it, but threw me into prison.—There I expiated my crime against the gallant Bruce! Not one of all the Scottish lords in Edward's court, ever came to beguile a moment of sorrow from their captive monarch.—Lonely I lived; for the tyrant even deprived me of the comfort of seeing my fellow-prisoner Lord Douglas, he whom attachment to my true interests had betrayed to an English prison. I never saw him after the day of his being put into the Tower, until that of his death."—Wallace interrupted him with an exclamation of surprise. "Yes," added Baliol, "I myself closed his eyes: at that awful hour he petitioned to see me, and the boon was granted. I went to him; and then, with his dying breath, he spoke truths to me which were indeed messengers from hea-

ven: they taught me what I was, and what I might be. He died: Edward was then in Flanders; and you, brave Wallace, being triumphant in Scotland, and laying such a stress in your negociations for the return of Douglas, the Southron cabinet agreed to conceal his death; and by making his name an instrument to excite your hopes and fear, turn your anxiety for him to their own advantage."

The blood spread in deep scarlet over the face of Bruce:—"With what a race have I been so long connected!—what mean subterfuges, what dastardly deceits, for the leaders of a great nation to adopt! Oh! king!" exclaimed he, turning to Baliol, "if you have errors to atone for, what then must be the penalty of my sin, for holding so long with an enemy as vile as ambitious!—Scotland! Scotland! I must weep tears of blood for this!" He rose in agitation.—Baliol followed him with his eyes. "Amiable Bruce! you too severely arraign a fault that was venial

in you. Your father gave himself to Edward, and his son accompanied the tribute." Bruce vehemently answered, "If King Edward ever said that, he uttered a falsehood.—My father loved him, confided in him, and the ingrate betrayed him!—His fidelity, was no gift of himself in acknowledgment of inferiority; it was the pledge of a friendship, exchanged on equal terms, on the fields of Palestine: and well did King Edward know that he had no right over either my father or me, for, in the moment he doubted our attachment, he was aware of having forfeited it; he knew he had legally no claim on us; and forgetting every law, human and divine, threw us into prison. But my father found liberty in the grave, and I am ready to shew him my power in ——" he would have added "Scotland;" but he forbore to give, perhaps, the last blow to the unhappy Baliol, by shewing him that his kingdom had indeed passed from him, and that the man was before him, destined

to wield his sceptre. He stopped, and sat down in generous confusion.

"Hesitate not," said Baliol, "to say where you will shew your power! I know that the brave Wallace has laid open the way. Had I possessed such a leader of my troops, I should not now be lying a mendicant in this hovel; I should not be a creature to be pitied and despised.—Wear him, Bruce, wear him in your heart's core. He gives the throne he might have filled."—"Make not that a subject of praise," cried Wallace, "which, if I had left undone, would have stampt me a traitor. I have only performed my duty; and may the Holy Anointer of the hearts of kings, guide Bruce to his kingdom, and keep him there in peace and honour."

Baliol rose in his bed at these words: "Bruce," said he, "approach me near." He obeyed. The feeble monarch turned to Wallace: "You have supported what was my kingdom, through its last strug-

gles for liberty: put forth your hand, and support its exiled sovereign in his last regal act." Wallace obeying, raised the king so as to enable him to assume a kneeling posture. Dizzy with the exertion, Baliol for a moment rested on the shoulder of the chief, and then looking up, he saw Bruce gazing on him with compassionate interest. The unhappy monarch stretched out his arms to heaven:—"May God pardon the injuries which my fatal ambition did to you and yours; the miseries I brought upon my country;—and let your reign redeem my errors? May the spirit of wisdom bless you, my son!" His hands were now laid with pious fervour on the head of Bruce, who, at this benediction, sunk on his knees before him. "Whatever rights I had to the crown of Scotland, by the worthlessness of my reign they are forfeited; and I resign all unto you, even to the participation of the mere title of king; and what has been as the ghost of

my former self, an accusing spirit to me, will, I trust, be as an angel of light to you, to conduct your people into all happiness!"—exhausted by his feelings, he sunk back into the arms of Wallace.—Bruce, starting from the ground, poured a little of the herb-balsam into the king's mouth, and he revived. As Wallace laid him back on his pillow, he gazed wistfully at him, and grasping his hand, said in a low voice, "How did I throw a blessing from me! But in those days, when I rejected your services at Dunbar, I knew not the Almighty-arm which brought the boy of Ellerslie to save his country!—I scorned the patriot-flame that spoke your mission, and the mercy of Heaven departed from me!"(q)

Memory was now busy with the thoughts of Bruce. He remembered his father's weak, if not criminal devotion at that time to the interests of Edward; he remembered his heart-wrung death; and looking at the desolate old age of another

of Edward's victims, his brave soul melted to pity and regret, and he retired into a distant part of the room to shed unobserved the tears he could not restrain. Wallace soon after saw the eyes of the exhausted king close in sleep: and cautious of awakening him, he did not stir; but leaning against the thick oaken frame of the bed, was soon lost in as deep a repose.

After some time of complete stillness, (for the old dame, and the attendants, were at rest in the outward chamber,) Bruce, whose low sighs were echoed by the wind alone, which swept in gusts by the little casement, looked towards the abdicated monarch's couch. He slept profoundly, yet frequently started, as if disturbed by troubled dreams. Wallace moved not on his hard pillow; and the serenity of perfect peace, rested upon all his features:—"How tranquil is the sleep of the virtuous!" thought Bruce, as he contemplated the difference between his

state and that of Baliol's; "there lies an accusing conscience; here rests one of the most faultless of created beings. It is, it is, the sleep of innocence?—Come ye slanderers," continued he, mentally calling on those he had left at Edward's court, "and tell me if an adulterer could look thus when he sleeps!—Is there one trace of irregular passion about that placid mouth? Does one of those heavenly-composed features, bear testimony to emotions, which leave marks even when subdued?—No; virtue has set up her throne in that breast, and well may kings come to bow to it!"

## CHAP. X.

THE entrance of the old woman about an hour after sunrise, awakened Wallace; but Baliol continued to sleep. On

the chief's opening his eyes, Bruce with a smile stretched out his hand to him. Wallace rose, and whispering the widow to abide by her guest till they should return, for they intended to see him safe to his home; went forth with Bruce, to enjoy the mutual confidence of friendship. A wood opened its umbrageous arms at a little distance; and thither, over the dew-bespangled grass, they bent their way. The birds sung from tree to tree; and Wallace, seating himself under an over-hanging larch, which canopied a narrow winding of the river Seine, listened, with mingled pain and satisfaction, to the communications which Bruce had to impart relative to the recent scenes at Durham, and his escape from so many threatening dangers.

"So rapid have been the events," observed the Scottish prince, as he concluded his narrative, "that all appears to me a troubled vision:—and blest indeed was the awaking of last night, when

your voice sounding from the room below that in which I slept, called me to embrace my best friend, as became the son of my ancestors—free; and ready to renew the brightness of their name!"

The discourse next turned on their future plans. Wallace, having mentioned his adventure with the Red Reaver, and the acknowledgments of Philip for the rescue of his son; proposed, that the favour he should ask in return, (as the King of France seemed very earnest to bestow on him some especial mark of gratitude;) would be his interference with Edward, to grant the Scots a peaceable retention of their rights, "And then," said he to Bruce, "you will take possession of your kingdom, with the olive branch in your hand." Bruce smiled, but shook his head; "And what then will Robert Bruce be? A king, to be sure! but a king without a name.—Who won me my kingdom? Who accomplished this peace? Was it not William Wallace? Can I

then consent to mount the throne of my ancestors, so poor, so inconsiderable a creature? I am not jealous of your fame, Wallace; I glory in it; for you are more to me than the light to my eyes:—but I would prove my right to the crown, by deeds worthy of a sovereign. Till I have so shewn myself, in the field against Scotland's enemies; I cannot consent to be restored to my inheritance, even by you."

"And is it in war alone," returned Wallace, "that you can shew deeds worthy of a sovereign? Think a moment, my dear friend, and then scorn your objection. Look around on the annals of history; nay, before your eyes, on the daily occurrences of the world, and see how many are brave and complete generals; how few, wise legislators, and such efficient rulers, as to procure obedience to the laws, and happiness to the people. This is the commission of a king: to be the representative on earth,

of the Father who is in heaven. Here is exercise for courage, for enterprise, for fortitude; for every virtue, which elevates the character of man: this is the god-like jurisdiction of a sovereign. To go to the field, to lead his people to scenes of carnage, is often a duty in kings; but it is one of those necessities, which, more than the trifling circumstances of sustaining nature by sleep and food, reminds the conqueror of the degraded state of mortality. The one, shews the weakness of the body; the other, the corruption of the soul. For, how far must man have fallen beneath his former heavenly nature, before he can delight in the destruction of his fellow men! Lament not then, brave and virtuous prince, that I have kept your hands from the stains of blood. Shew yourself beyond the vulgar apprehension of what is fame; and conscious of the powers with which the Creator has en-

dowed you, assume your throne with the dignity that is their due.—Whether it be in the cabinet, or in the field that He calls you to act, obey; and rely on it, that a name greater than that of the hero of Macedon, will await Robert King of Scots!" "You almost persuade me;" returned Bruce: "but let us see Philip, and then I will decide."

As morning was now advanced, the friends turned towards the cottage; intending to see Baliol safe; and then proceed together to Guienne, to the rescue of Lady Helen: that accomplished, they would visit Paris, and hear its monarch's determination.

On entering the hovel, they found Baliol awake, and anxiously inquiring of the widow what was become of the two knights. At sight of them, he stretched out his hands to both, and said, he was so revived by sleep, that he should be able to travel in a few hours. Wallace

proposed sending to Rouen for a litter, to carry him the more easily thither. "No," cried Baliol with a frown; "Rouen shall never again see me within its walls. It was coming from thence that I lost my way last night; and though my poor servants would gladly have returned thither with me, sooner than see me perish in the storm; yet, rather would I have been found dead on the road, a reproach to the kings who have betrayed me, than have taken an hour's shelter in that inhospitable city."

After some questions from the friends, Baliol, while they took the simple breakfast prepared for them by the widow, related, that in consequence of the interference of Philip le Bel with Edward, he had been released from the Tower of London, and sent to France, under an oath never again to leave that country. Philip then gave the exiled king the castle of Galliard for a residence, where he was soon joined by

several of his old adherents from Scotland. But his luxurious son, unable to exist, divided from the pleasures of a gay court, abandoned his father, and went to Navarre; madly hoping to be elevated to the hand of its sovereign's daughter. Baliol for some time enjoyed the shadow of royalty at Galliard; having still a sort of court, composed of the followers who were with him, and the barons in the neighbourhood. Philip allowed him guards, and a splendid table. But on the peace being signed between France and England; that Edward might give up his ally, the Earl of Flanders, to his offended liege lord, Philip consented to relinquish the cause of Baliol; and though he should still grant him shelter in his dominions, remove from him all the appendages of a king.

"Accordingly," continued Baliol, "the guard was taken from my gates; my establishment reduced to that of a private nobleman; and no longer having it in my

power to gratify the avidity, or to flatter the ambition of those who came about me, I was soon left alone. All but the poor old men whom you see, and who had been faithful to me through every change of my life, instantly deserted the forlorn Baliol. But they remained; and from being servants, became my companions; for none other, ever appeared within the walls of Galliard. In vain I remonstrated with Philip: either my letters never reached him, or he disdained to answer the man whose cause he could abandon. Things were in this state, when, the other day, an English lord, who had been stranded off the coast, brought his suite to my castle. I received him with hospitality; but soon found that what I gave in kindness, he seized as a right;—in the true spirit of his master Edward, he treated me more like the keeper of an hostel than a generous host: and such was his insolence, on my attempting to plead with him for a Scottish

lady, whom his turbulent passions has forced from her country, and reduced to a pitiable state of illness, that he laughed at my arguments, and told me,—had I taken care of my kingdom, the door would not have been left open for him to steal its fairest prize——."

Wallace interrupted him—" Heaven grant that you may be speaking of Lord de Valence, and Lady Helen Mar!" "I am," replied Baliol; " but surely Sir William Wallace, cannot rejoice in his countrywoman being made the compulsive property of any Southron lord?" " No;" replied he; " but I rejoice in finding them so near; I rejoice in the opportunity, of so soon performing my word to her dying father, in rescuing her from the villain's arms." " They are now at Galliard," returned Baliol; " and as her illness seems a lingering one, De Valence declared to me his intentions of continuing there. He seized upon the best apartments, and carried himself with so

much haughtiness that, provoked beyond endurance, I ordered my horse, and accompanied by my honest men rode to Rouen, to obtain redress from the governor. But the unworthy Frenchman told me with a look of derision, that his master, having more respect for one English earl, than for all the dethroned monarchs in Christendom; he advised me to go back, and by flattering De Valence, try to regain the favour of Edward. I retired in indignation, determining to assert my own rights in my own castle; but the storm overtook me; —and after being abandoned by my friends, I was saved by my enemies."

——"Then you mean now to return to Galliard?"—inquired Wallace. "Immediately: and should you go with me, I engage, if the lady consent, (and that I do not doubt; for she scorns his prayers for her hand, and passes night and day in tears;) to assist in her escape."——

"That," Wallace replied, "is precisely what I was going to request."

Baliol advised that they should not all return to the castle together, as the sight of two knights of their appearance, accompanying his host, might alarm De Valence. "The quietest way," said the deposed king, "is the surest. Follow me at a short distance; and towards the shadows of evening, knock at the gates, and request a night's entertainment. I will grant it; and then your happy destiny, ever fortunate Wallace, must do the rest."

This scheme being approved, a litter of hurdles was soon formed for the invalid monarch, and the old woman's pallet spread upon it: "I will return it to you, my good widow;" said Baliol; "and with proofs of my gratitude." The two friends assisted the king to rise. When he set his foot to the floor, he felt so surprisingly better, that he thought he could

ride the journey. Wallace over-ruled this wish, for fear of further delays; and with Bruce, supported his emaciated figure towards the door. The widow stood to see her guests depart. Baliol, as he mounted the litter, put a piece of gold into her hand. Wallace saw not what the king had given, and gave a purse as his reward. Bruce had nought to bestow. He had left Durham with little, and that little was expended. "My good widow," said he, "I am poor in every thing but gratitude. In lieu of gold you must accept my prayers!" "May they, sweet youth," replied she, "return on your own head; giving you bread from the barren land, and water out of the sterile rock!" "And have you no blessing for me, mother!" said Wallace, turning round, and regarding her with an impressive look; "some spirit, you wist not of, speaks in your words." Then it must be a good spirit," answered she; "for all around me betokens gladness. The

scripture saith, *Be kind to the way-faring man, for many have so entertained angels unawares!* Yesterday, at this time, I was the poorest of all the daughters of charity. Last night I opened my doors in the storm, you entered, and now give me riches; he follows, and endows me with his prayers! Am I not, then, greatly favoured by Him, who dispenseth to all who trust in Him? His mercy and your goodness, shall not be hidden; for from this day forth, I will light a fire each night, in a part of my house, where it must be seen on every side from a great distance. Like you, princely knight, whose gold will make it burn, it shall shine afar; and give light and comfort to all who approach it." "And when you look on it," said Wallace, "tell your beads for me. I am a son of war; and it may blaze when my vital spark is just expiring." The widow paused, gazed on him steadily, and then burst into tears. "And is it possible that

beautiful face may be laid in dust, that youthful form lie cold in clay,—and these aged limbs survive to light a beacon to your memory!—and it shall arise! it shall burn like a holy flame, an incense to Heaven, for the soul of him who has succoured the feeble, and made the widow's heart to sing for joy!" Wallace pressed the old woman's withered hand: Bruce did the same. She saw them mount their horses; and when they disappeared from her eyes, returned into her cottage and wept.

## CHAP. XI.

WHEN Baliol arrived within a few miles of chateau Galliard, he pointed to a wood, and told Wallace, that under its groves he had best shelter himself till the

setting-sun; soon after which he should expect him and Bruce at the castle.

Long indeed seemed the interval. It usually happens, that in contemplating a project, while the period of its execution appears distant, we think on it with composure; but when the time of action is near; when we only wait the approach of an auxiliary, or the lapse of an hour; every passing moment appears an age; and the impatient soul, seems ready to break every bound to grasp the completion of its enterprise. So Wallace now felt; felt as he had never done before: for in all his warlike exploits, each achievement had followed the moment of resolve; but here, he was delayed, to grow in ardour, as he contemplated an essay, in which every generous principle of man was summoned into action. He was going to rescue from the hands of a ravisher, the daughter of his first friend in the great struggle, and who had fallen in the cause;—a helpless woman, in the

hands of a man of violence! Glad was he, then, to see the sun sink behind the western hills. Bruce and he closed their visors, mounted their horses, and set off on full speed towards the chateau.

When they came in view of the antique towers of Galliard, they slackened their pace, and leisurely advanced to the gates. The bugle of Wallace demanded admittance; a courteous assent was brought by the warder; and the friends were conducted into a room, where Baliol sat in a large oak chair. De Valence was walking to and fro in a great chafe: he started at sight of the princely armour of Wallace, (for he, as Baliol had done, conceived from the lilied diadem, that the stranger must be of the royal house of France;) and composing his turbulent spirit, bowed respectfully to the supposed prince. Wallace returned the salutation; and Baliol, rising, accosted him with no inconsiderable degree of animation. He

saw the mistake of De Valence, and perceived how greatly it would facilitate the execution of their project.

On his return to the chateau, De Valence had received him with more than his former insolence; for the governor of Rouen had sent him information of the despised monarch's discontent:—and when the despotic lord, heard a bugle at the gate; and learnt that it was answered by the admission of two travelling knights; he flew to Baliol, in displeasure, commanding him to recal his granted leave.—At the moment of his wrath, Wallace entered, and covered him with confusion. Struck with seeing a French prince, in one of the persons he was going to treat with such indignity, he shrunk into himself; and bowed before him, with all the cowering meanness of his base and haughty soul. Wallace, feeling his pre-eminence, bent his head, in acknowledgment, with a majesty, which convinced the earl

that he was not mistaken. Baliol welcomed his guest, in a manner not to dispel the illusion.

"Happy am I," cried he, "that the hospitality which John Baliol intended to shew to a mere traveller, confers on him the distinction of serving one of a race, whose favour confers protection, and its friendship honour." Wallace returned a gracious reply to this speech; and turning to Bruce, said, "This knight is my friend; and though neither of us, from peculiar circumstances, chuse to disclose our names, whatever they may be, during this journey; yet you will confide in the word of one, whom you have honoured by the address you have now made, and believe, that his friend is not unworthy the hospitalities of him who was once King of Scots."

De Valence now approached; and announcing who he was, assured the knights, in the name of the King of England, whom he was going to represent in Gui-

enne, of every respect from himself, and assistance from his retinue, to bring them properly on their way. "I return you the thanks due to your courtesy;" replied Wallace; "and shall certainly remain to-night a burthen on King Baliol; but in the morning, we must depart as we came; having a vow to perform, which excludes the service of attendants."

A splendid supper was soon served, at the board of which De Valence sat as well as Baliol. The English earl never withdrew, from the moment that the strangers entered; so cautious was he, to prevent Baliol informing his illustrious guests of the captivity of Lady Helen Mar. Wallace ate nothing; he sat with his visor still closed; and almost in profound silence, never speaking but when spoken to, and then only answering in as few words as possible. De Valence supposed that this taciturnity was connected with his vow, and did not further remark it! but Bruce (who at Caen had furnished

himself with a complete suit of black armour) appeared, though equally invisible under his visor, infinitely more accessible. The humbler fashion of his martial accoutrement, did not announce the prince; but his carriage was so noble, his conversation bespoke so accomplished a mind and brave a spirit, that De Valence did not doubt, that both the men before him, were of the royal family. He had never seen Charles de Valois; and believing that he now saw him in Wallace, he directed all that discourse to Bruce, which he meant should reach the ear of De Valois, and from him pass to that of the King of France. Bruce saw what was passing in his mind; and with as much amusement, as design, led forward the earl's mistake; but rather, by allowing him to deceive himself, than by any active means on his side to increase the deception. De Valence threw out hints respecting a frontier town in Guienne, north of the Garonne, which he

thought his royal master could be persuaded to yield to the French monarch, as naturally belonging to Gascony. But then the affair must be properly laid before him; and that De Valence said he believed, (had he motive to investigate some parchments in his possession,) he could do, and also convince Edward of the superior claims of the French king. Then casting out hints, of the claim he had, by right of his ancestors, to the signiory of Valence in Dauphiny; he, in short, after much circumlocution, gave them to understand, that if Philip would either invest him with the revenues of Valence on the Rhone, or give him some equivalent, he would engage that the town in question should be delivered to France.

Baliol, notwithstanding his resolution to keep awake, and assist his friends in their enterprise, was so overcome by fatigue, that he fell asleep soon after supper, and so gave De Valence full opportunity to unveil his widely-grasping mind

to Bruce. Wallace now saw, that the execution of his project must depend wholly upon himself: and how to inform Helen that he was in the castle, and of his plan to get her out of it, hardly occupied him more, than what to devise, to detain De Valence in the banquetting-room, while he went forth to prosecute his design. As these thoughts absorbed him, by an unconscious movement, he turned towards the English earl. De Valence paused and looked at him, supposing he was going to speak; but finding that he did not, the earl addressed him with some hesitation, feeling an inexplicable awe of directly saying to him, what he had so easily uttered to his more approachable companion: "I seek not, illustrious stranger," said he, "to inquire the name you have already intimated must be concealed; but I have sufficient faith in that brilliant circlet around your brows, to be convinced (as none other than the royal hand of Philip could bestow it) that

it distinguishes a man of the first honour. You now know my sentiments, prince; and for the advantage of both kings, I confide them to your services." Wallace rose: "Whether I am prince or vassal," replied he, "my services shall ever be given in the cause of justice; and of that, Earl de Valence, you will be convinced when next you hear of me. My friend," cried he, turning to Bruce, "you will remain with our host: I go to perform the vigils of my vow."

Bruce understood him. It was not merely with their host he was to remain, but to detain De Valence; and opening, at once, the versatile powers of his abundant mind; his vivacity charmed the earl, while the magnificence of his views in policy, corroborated the idea of De Valence, that he was conversing with one, whose birth had placed him beyond even the temptations of those ambitions which were at that moment subjecting his soul, to every species of flattery, meanness,

and in fact, disloyalty. Bruce, in his turn, listened to all De Valence's dreams of aggrandizement, with much apparent interest; and recollecting his reputation for a love of wine, he replenished his goblet so often, that the fumes made him forget all reserves; and after pouring forth the whole history of his attachment to Helen, and his resolution to subdue her abhorrence by love and grandeur, he gradually lowered his key, and at last fell fast asleep.

Meanwhile, Wallace, as soon as he quitted the banquetting-chamber, wrapped himself in Baliol's blue cloak which lay in the anti-room, (for he had observed that De Valence wore a similar one at supper) and envelopping even his helmet in the friendly mantle, moved swiftly along the gallery towards the chamber of Helen. To be prepared for all obstacles, Wallace had obtained from Baliol a particular description of the situation of every apartment it might be re-

quisite for him to visit. It was now within an hour of midnight. He passed through several passages, and at last arrived at the door. It opened into a small chamber, in which lay two female attendants asleep. Wallace gently raised the latch; and with caution taking the lamp, which burnt on their table, glided softly through the curtain that filled the cedar arch which led into the room of Helen. He approached the bed; and covered the light with his hand, that it might not glare in her eyes while he observed her. Helen was in a profound sleep, but pale as the sheet which envelopped her:—her countenance seemed troubled, her brows frequently knit themselves, and she started as she dreamt, as if in apprehension. Once he heard her lips faintly murmur, "Save me, Wallace! on you alone——" there she stopped. His heart beat at this appeal. "I come to save thee," he would have cried, but he checked the exclamation:—his hand, in his agitation, dropped

at the same instant from before the lamp, and the blaze striking full on her eyes, waked her. She looked up; she saw, as she supposed, her dream realized, De Valence leaning over her bed, and herself wholly in his power:—for she knew not that the compassionate Baliol had returned. A shriek of horror was bursting from her lips, when Wallace, seeing her almost frantic dismay, and dreading her cries might alarm the female guards, hastily raised the visor from his face, and holding the lamp so, that she could see him distinctly—at the moment when despair was in her heart, and her whole soul turned with abhorrence from the supposed De Valence, she met the eyes dearest to her on earth—those of Sir William Wallace. A cry of joy would have escaped her, had he not put his finger on his lip; but falling back on her bed, the ecstacy of hope, of happiness, of again seeing him, who in her estimation was her earthly security; her all here, now that her fa-

ther was no more; shook her with such strong emotions, that Wallace feared to see her delicate frame expire in the tumult, or at least find repose in some deadly swoon. Alarmed for her life, or the accomplishment of her deliverance, he threw himself on his knees beside her, and softly whispered, "Be composed, for the love of Heaven and your own safety! Be collected and firm, and you shall fly this place with me to night." Helen, with all the fervour of her grateful soul, hardly conscious of the action, grasped the hand that held hers, and would have replied; but her voice failing, she fainted on his arm. Wallace, now saw no alternative, but to remove her hence, even in this insensible state; and raising her gently in his arms, envelopped in the silk coverlid, with cautious steps bore her through the curtained entrance, and past the sleeping damsels, into the gallery. To meet any of De Valence's men, while in this situation, would betray all. To avoid this,

he hastened through the illuminated passages, and turning into the apartment appointed for himself, laid the now reviving Helen, upon a couch. "Water?" said she, "and I shall soon be myself again." He gave her some; and at the same time, laying a page's suit of clothes (which Baliol had provided) beside her; "Dress yourself in these, Lady Helen," said he; "I shall withdraw, meanwhile, into the passage; but your safety depends on expedition."

Before she could answer, he had disappeared. And Helen, having instantly thrown herself on her knees to thank a Higher Power, for this commencement of her deliverance, and to beseech his blessing on its consummation, rose strengthened; and obeying Wallace; the moment she was equipped, she laid her hand upon the latch, but the watchful ear of her friend heard her, and he immediately opened the door. The lamps of the gallery shone full upon the light

grace of her figure, as shrinking with blushing modesty, and yet eager to be with her preserver, she stood hesitating before him. He threw his cloak over her, and putting her arm through his, in the unobscured blaze of his princely armour, descended to the lower hall of the castle. One man only, was there. Wallace ordered him to open the great door.—"It is a fine night," said he, "and I shall ride some miles before I sleep."—The man asked if he were to saddle the horses;—he was answered in the affirmative; and the gate being immediately unbarred, Wallace led his precious charge into the freedom of the open air. As soon as she saw the outside of those towers, which she had entered as the worst of all prisoners, her heart so overflowed with gratitude to her deliverer, that, sinking by his side upon her knees, she could only grasp his hand, and bathe it with the pure tears of rescued innocence. Her manner penetrated his soul; he raised

her in his arms: but she, dreading that she had perhaps done too much, convulsively articulated—"My father—his blessing——" "Was a rich endowment, Lady Helen," returned he, "and you shall ever find me deserving it." Her head leaned on his breast. But how different was the lambent flame which seemed to mingle in either heart, as they now beat against each other; from the destructive fire, which shot from the burning veins of Lady Mar, when she would have polluted with her unchaste lips, this shrine of a beloved wife, this bosom consecrated to her sacred image!—Wallace had shrunk from her, as from the touch of some hideous contagion; but with Lady Helen, it was soul meeting soul; it was innocence resting on the bosom of virtue. No thought, that saints would not have approved was there; no emotion, which angels might not have shared, glowed in their grateful bosoms—she, grateful to him; both grateful to God.

The man brought the horses from the stable. He knew that two strangers had arrived at the castle, and not noticing Helen's stature, supposed that they were both before him. He had been informed by the servants, that the taller of the two was the Count de Valois, and he now held the stirrup for him to mount.—But Wallace placed Helen on Bruce's horse, and then vaulting on his own, put a piece of gold into the attendant's hand. "You will return, noble prince?" inquired the man. "Why should you doubt it?" answered Wallace. "Because," replied the servant, "I wish the brother of the King of France to know, the foul deeds which are done in his dominions." "By whom?" asked Wallace, surprised at this address. "By the Earl de Valence, prince," answered he; "he has now in this castle, a beautiful lady, whom he brought from a foreign land, and treats in a manner unbecoming a knight or a man."—"And what would you have

me do?" said Wallace, willing to judge whether this applicant were honest in his appeal: "Come in the power of your royal brother," answered he, "and demand the Lady Helen Mar of Lord de Valence."

Helen, who had listened with trepidation to this dialogue, drew nearer Wallace, and whispered in an agitated voice, "Ah! let us hasten away!" The man was close enough to hear her. "Hah!" cried he, in a burst of doubtful joy, "Is it so? Is she here? say so, noble knight, and Joppa Grimsby will serve ye both for ever!"—"Grimsby!" cried Helen, recollecting his voice, the moment he had declared his name; "What, the honest English soldier?—I, and my preserver will indeed value so trusty a follower."

The name of Grimsby was too familiar to the memory of Wallace, too closely associated with his most cherished meditations, for him not to recognise it with

melancholy pleasure. He had never seen Grimsby, but he knew him well worthy of his confidence, and ordering him (if he really desired to follow Lady Helen) to bring two more horses from the stables: when they were brought, he made the joyful signal concerted with Bruce:—as soon as he and his charge were safe out of the castle, he was to sound the Scottish pryse.

The happy tidings met the ear of Bruce, anxiously watching the sleep of De Valence, for fear he should awake, and leaving the room, interrupt Wallace in his enterprise. What then was his transport, when the first note of the horn burst upon the silence around him.—He sprang on his feet. The impetuosity of the action waked Baliol. Bruce made a sign to him to be silent, and pressing his hand with energy, forgot the former Baliol in the present, and for a moment bending his knee, kissed the hand he held, and

rising—was out of the room in an instant.

He flew across the outward hall, through the open gates; and Wallace perceiving him, rode out from under the shadow of the trees. The bright light of the moon shone on his sparkling crest:—that was sufficient for Bruce; and Wallace falling back again into the shade, was joined the next moment by his friend. Who this friend was, for whom her deliverer told Helen he waited, she did not ask; for she dreaded, while so near danger, to breathe a word; but she guessed that it must be either Murray or Edwin. De Valence, impatient to shew her how desolate she was left, how dependant on him for love and happiness, had told her, that not only her father was no more, but that her uncles the lords Bothwell and Ruthven had both been killed in the last battle. Hence, one of her two cousins, she now, with a saddened joy, prepared to see;—and every filial recollection pressing on

her heart, her tears flowed silently, and in abundance. As Bruce approached, his black mantle so wrapped him, that she could not distinguish his figure. Wallace stretched forth his hand to him in silence; he grasped it with the warm, but mute congratulation of friendship; and throwing himself on his steed, while Grimsby mounted another, triumphantly exclaimed, "Now for Paris!" and without the aid of spurs to his eager horse, he led the way in full speed. Helen recognised none she knew in his voice; and drawing close to the white courser of Wallace; with something like disappointment, mingling with her happier thoughts, kept pace with the fleetness of its steps.

## CHAP. XII.

AVOIDING the frequented track of Rouen, Wallace, (to whom Grimsby was now a most valuable auxiliary, being well acquainted with the country,) took a sequestered path by the banks of the Orne, and entered the forest of Alençon just as the moon set.—Having ridden far, and without cessation, Grimsby proposed, for the lady's sake, that they should alight, and allow her to repose awhile under the trees.—Helen was indeed nearly exhausted; though the idea of her happy flight, by inspiring her with a strength which surprised even herself, had for a long time kept her insensible to fatigue. While her friends pressed on with a speed, which allowed no more conversation than occasional inquiries of how she bore the

journey,—the swiftness of the motion, and the rapidity of the events, which had brought her from the most frightful of situations, into one, the dearest to her secret and hardly-breathed wishes,—so bewildered her faculties, she almost feared that she was only enjoying one of those dreams which, since her captivity, had often mocked her with the image of Wallace and her release; and every moment, she feared to awake, and find herself still the prisoner of De Valence.——"I want no rest," replied she to the observation of Grimsby; "I could feel none, till we are beyond the possibility of being overtaken by my enemy."—"You are as safe in this wood, lady," returned the soldier, "as you can be in any place betwixt Galliard and Paris: it is many leagues from the chateau; and lies in so remote a direction, that I am sure, were the earl to pursue us, he would never chuse this path." "And did he even come up with us, dear Lady Helen,"

said Wallace, "could you fear when with your father's friend?" "It is for my father's friend, I fear;" gently answered she; "I can have no dreads for myself, while under such protection."

A very little more persuaded Helen; and Grimsby having spread his cloak on the grass, Wallace lifted her from the horse. As soon as she put her foot to the ground, and attempted to stand, her head grew giddy, and she must have fallen, but for the supporting arm of her watchful friend. He carried her to the couch prepared by the good soldier, and laid her on it. Grimsby had been more provident than they could have expected, for when, after saddling the second pair of horses, he returned into the hall for his cloak, he found the remnants of the seneschal's supper still on the table, and taking an undrawn flask of wine, put it into his vest. This he now produced, and Wallace made Helen drink some of it. The cordial revived her; and leaning against his arm,

she soon found the repose her wearied frame, in spite of the happy agitation of her spirits, demanded and induced. For fear of disturbing her, not a word was spoken.—Wallace supported her head, and Bruce sat at her feet, while Grimsby remained with the horses as a kind of outpost.

Sweet was her sleep; for the thoughts with which she sunk into slumber, occupied her dreams. Still she was riding by the side of Wallace, and listening to his voice, cheering her through the lengthening way! But some wild animal, in its nightly prowl, starting upon the horses, they began to snort and plunge: and though the no less terrified alarmer fled far away, it was with difficulty that the voice and management of Grimsby could quiet them. The noise, suddenly awoke Helen; and her scattered faculties, not immediately re-collecting themselves, she felt an instant impression that all had indeed been but a dream, and starting in

affright, exclaimed—" Where am I? Wallace, where art thou?"——" Here, my dear Lady Helen;" cried he, pressing her to his breast with fraternal tenderness; " I am here; you are safe with your friend and brother." Her heart beat violently with a terror, which this assurance could hardly subdue. At last she spoke, and in an agitated voice said, " Forgive me, if my senses are a little bewildered? —I have suffered so much—and this release seems so miraculous, that at moments I hardly believe it real. I wish day-light were come, that I might be convinced." When she had uttered these words, she suddenly stopped, and added, as she felt herself blush all over.—" But I am very silly to talk thus;—I believe my late terrors have disordered my head."

" What you feel, lady, is only natural;" observed Bruce; " I experienced the same, when I first regained my liberty, and found myself on the road to join Sir William Wallace. Dear, indeed, is

liberty; but dearer is the friend, whose virtues make our recovered freedom sure." ——"Who speaks to me?" said Helen, in a low voice to Wallace, and raising her head from that bosom, on which she felt she did but too much delight to lean: "One," answered Wallace, in the same tone, "who is not to be publicly known, until occasion demands it; one who, I trust in God, will one day seal the happiness of Scotland,—Robert Bruce." That name, which, when in her idea it belonged to Wallace, used to raise such emotions in her breast, she now heard with an indifference that surprised her. But who could be more to Scotland, than Wallace had been? All that was in the power of patriot, or of king, to do for his country, he had done; and what then was Bruce in her estimation? One who, basking in pleasures, while his country suffered; allowed a brave subject to breast, to overthrow, every danger before he would put himself forward: and now he

appeared; to assume a throne, which, though his right by birth, he had most justly forfeited, by neglecting the duties indispensable in the heir of so great and oppressed a kingdom. These would have been her thoughts of him:—but Wallace called this Bruce his friend: the few words which she had heard him speak, were generous, and full of a gratitude to her deliverer, which would have engaged her esteem, even had it not been accompanied by a tone of voice, and manner of expression, which bespoke an ardent and amiable mind.

The answer, however, that she made to the reply of Wallace, was spontaneous, and struck upon the heart of Bruce: "How long," said she, "have you promised Scotland it should see that day."

"Long, to my grief, Lady Helen," rejoined Bruce; "I would say to my shame, had I ever intentionally erred towards my country; but ignorance of her state, and of the depth of Edward's treach-

ery, was my crime. I only required to be shewn the right path, to pursue it; and Sir William Wallace came to point the way. My soul, lady, is not unworthy the destiny to which he calls me." Had it been light, she would have seen the flush of conscious virtue that overspread his fine countenance while he spoke: but the words were sufficient, to impress her with that respect he deserved, and which her answer shewed:——" My ever-to-be-lamented father taught me, to consider Bruce as the rightful King of Scotland; and now that I see the day which he so often wished to hail, I cannot but regard it as the termination of Scotland's woes. Oh! had it been before: perhaps——" here she paused, for tears stopped her utterance. " You think," rejoined Bruce, " that much bloodshed might have been spared! But, dear Lady Helen, poison not the comfort of your life by that belief. No man exists, who could have effected so much for Scotland in so short a time,

and with so little loss, as our Wallace has done. Who, like him, makes mercy the companion of war; and compels even his enemies to emulate the clemency he shews? Fewer have been slain on the Scottish side, during the whole of his struggle with Edward, than were lost by Baliol on the fatal day of Dunbar. Then, no quarter was given; and too many of the wounded were left to perish on the field. But with Wallace, life was granted to all who asked; the wounded enemy, and the friend, were alike succoured by him. This conduct provoked the jealousy of the Southron generals, not to be surpassed in generosity; and thus, comparatively few have been lost. But if in that number, some were our noblest chiefs, we must be resigned to yield to God what is his own; nay, we must be grateful, daughter of the gallant Mar, for the manner in which they were taken. They fell in the arms of true glory, like parents defending their offspring; while others—

my grandfather and father, perished with broken hearts; in unavailing lamentations, that they could not share the fate of those who died for Scotland." "But you, dear Bruce," returned Wallace, "will live for her: will teach those, whose hearts have bled in her cause, to find a balm for every wound, in her prosperity."

Helen smiled through her tears at these words.—They spoke the heavenly consolation which had descended on her own mourning spirit. "If Scotland be to rest, under the happy reign of Robert Bruce, then envy cannot again assail Sir William Wallace, and my father has not shed his blood in vain. His beatified spirit, with those of my uncles Bothwell and Ruthven, will rejoice in such peace; and I shall enjoy it to felicity, in so sacred a participation." Wallace, surprised at her associating the name of Lord Ruthven with those who had fallen, interrupted her with the information, that when he last quitted Scotland, he had left him in

perfect health. Helen, happy at these tidings, explained that De Valence had given her the opposite intelligence, with other dreadful accounts, in order, most probably, by impressing her with an idea that she was friendless, to precipitate her into the determination of becoming his wife. But she did not repeat to her brave auditors all the arguments he had used to shake her impregnable heart. Impregnable, because a principle kept guard there, which neither flattery nor ambition could dispossess. He had told her, that the very day in which she would give him her hand, King Edward would send him viceroy into Scotland, where she should reign with all the power and magnificence of a queen. He was handsome, accomplished, and adored her: but Helen could not love him, whom she could not esteem; for she knew he was libertine, base, and cruel.—That he loved her, affected her not: she could only be sensible to an affection placed on worthy foun-

dations; and he who trampled on all virtues in his own actions, could not desire them when seen in her; he therefore must love her for the fairness of her form; and to place any value on such affection, was to grasp the wind. Personal flatteries having made no impression on Helen, ambitious projects were attempted with equal ill success. Had De Valence been lord of the east and western empire, could he have made her the envy and admiration of a congregated world, all would have been in vain: she had seen and known the virtues of Sir William Wallace, and from that hour, all that was excellent in man, all that was desirable on earth, seemed to her to be in him summed up. "On the barren heath," said she to herself; "in some desert island, with only thee and thy virtues, how happy could be Helen Mar! how great!—For, to share thy heart, thy noble, glorious heart, would be a bliss, a seal of honour from Heaven, with which no terrestrial eleva-

tion could compare!" Then would she sigh; then would she thank God for so ennobling her, as to make her capable of appreciating, and loving above all earthly things, the matchless virtues of Sir William Wallace. "Yes," thought she, on the very evening of the night when he so unexpectedly appeared to release her, "even in loving thy perfections, there is such enjoyment, that I would rather be as I am; what others might call the hopeless Helen; than the loving, and beloved, of any other man on earth. In thee, I love virtue; and the imperishable sentiment will bless me in the world to come." With these thoughts she had fallen asleep: she dreamt that she called on Wallace to save her, and on opening her eyes, she had found him indeed near.

Every word which this almost adored friend, now said to comfort her with regard to her own immediate losses; to assure her of the peace of Scotland, should

Heaven bless the return of Bruce; took root in her soul, and sprang up into resignation and happiness. She listened to the plans of Wallace and Bruce to effect their great enterprise; and several hours of the night, during which she rested, passed to her not only in repose, but in enjoyment. Wallace, though pleased with the sympathetic interest she took in even the minutest details of their design, became fearful of overtasking her weakened frame: he whispered Bruce to gradually drop the conversation; and, as it died away, slumber again stole over her eye-lids.

The dawn had spread far over the sky while she yet slept. Wallace sat contemplating her, and the now sleeping Bruce, who had also imperceptibly sunk to rest. Various and anxious were his meditations. He had hardly seen seven-and-twenty years, yet so had he been tried in the vicissitudes of life, that he felt as if he had lived a century; and instead of looking on

the lovely Helen, as on one whose charms might claim a lover's wishes in his breast, he regarded her with sentiments more like parental tenderness. That indeed seemed the affection which now reigned in his bosom. He felt as a father towards Scotland. For every son and daughter of that harassed country, he was ready to lay down his life. Edwin, he cherished in his heart, as he would have done the dearest of his own offspring. It was as a parent, to whom a beloved and prodigal son had returned, that he looked on Bruce. But Helen, of all Scotland's daughters, she was the most precious in his eyes: set love aside, and no object, without the touch of that all-pervading passion, could he regard with more endearing tenderness than he did Helen Mar. The shades of night vanished before the bright uprise of the king of day, and with them her slumbers. She stirred; she awoke. The lark was then soaring with shrill cadence over her head: its notes pierced the ear of Bruce,

and he started on his feet. "You have allowed me to sleep, Wallace!" "And why not?" replied he. "Here, it was safe enough for all to have slept. Had there been danger, I would have called you." "Whence, my good friend," cried Bruce with a smile; "did you draw the ethereal essence that animates your frame? You toil for us; watch for us; and yet you never seem fatigued, never discomposed!—How is this? What does it mean, Wallace?" "That the soul is immortal," answered he; "that it has a godlike power, even while on earth, to subdue the wants of this mortal frame. The circumstances in which Heaven has cast me, have disciplined my body to obey my mind in all things; and therefore, when the motives for exertion are strong within me, it is long, very long, before I feel hunger, thirst, or drowsiness. Indeed, while so occupied, I have often thought it possible, for the activity of the soul, so to wear the body, as some day to find it sud-

denly fall away from about her spiritual substance, and leave her unencumbered, without having felt the touch of death. And yet, that Elisha-like change," continued Wallace, "would not be till Heaven sees the appointed time.—Man does not live by bread alone, neither by sleep, nor any species of refreshment.—His spirit, who created all things, can give us rest while we keep the strictest vigils: His power can sustain the wasting frame, even in a barren wilderness."

"True," replied Helen, looking timidly up; "but, because Heaven is so gracious as sometimes to work miracles in our favour, surely we are not authorized to neglect the natural means of obtaining the same end?" "Certainly not," returned Wallace; "it is not for man to tempt God at any time. Sufficient for us, is it to abide by his all-wise dispensations. When we are in circumstances that allow the usual means of life, it is demanded of us to use them. But when

we are brought into situations, where watching, fasting, and uncommon toils are not to be avoided; then it is an essential part of our obedience, to perform our duties to the end, without any regard to the wants which may impede our way. It is in such an hour, when the soul of man, resolved to obey, looks down on human nature, and looks up to God, that he receives both the manna, and the everliving waters of heaven. By this faith and perseverance, the uplifted hands of Moses, prevailed over Amalek in Rephidim; and by the same, did the lengthened race of the sun light Joshua to a double victory in Gibeon."

The morning vapours being dispersed from the opposite plain, and Helen quite refreshed by her long repose, Wallace seated her on her horse, and they recommenced their journey. The helmets of both chiefs were now open.—Grimsby looked at one and the other; the countenance of both, assured him, that he

should find a protector in either. He drew towards Helen: she noticed his manner, and observing to Wallace that she believed the soldier wished to speak with her, checked her horse. At this action, Grimsby presumed to ride up, and bowing respectfully, said, that before he followed her to Paris, it would be right for the Count de Valois to know whom he had taken into his train; "one, madam, who has been degraded by King Edward; degraded," added he, "but not debased; that last disgrace depends on myself; and I should shrink from your protection, rather than court it, were I indeed vile." "I have too well proved your integrity, Grimsby," replied Helen, "to doubt it now; but what has the Count de Valois to do with your being under my protection? It is not to him we go, but to the French king." "And is not that knight with the diadem," inquired Grimsby with surprise, "the Count de Valois? All the servants at chateau Galliard told me he was so."

Helen, astonished at this, said the knight should answer for himself. At that moment Wallace was looking towards them. She quickened the step of her horse, and, followed by Grimsby, came to his side.

As soon as Wallace had heard from her, what was the wish of the soldier, he called him to approach. "My friend," said he, "you have claims upon me, which should ensure you my protection, were I even insensible to the honourable principles you have just declared to Lady Helen. But I repeat, I am already your friend.—You have only to speak, and all in my power to serve you, shall be done."

"Then, sir," returned he, "as mine is rather a melancholy story, and parts of it have already drawn tears from Lady Helen, if you will honour me with your attention apart from her, I would relate how I fell into disgrace with my sovereign."

Wallace fell a little back with Grimsby, and while Bruce and Helen rode

briskly forward, he, at a slower pace, prepared to listen to the recapitulation of scenes in which he was only too deeply interested. Grimsby, accordingly, began by narrating the fatal events at Ellerslie, which had compelled him to leave the army in Scotland. He related, that after quitting the priory of St. Fillan, he reached Guienne, and there served under the Earl of Lincoln, until the marriage of Edward with King Philip's sister, gave the English monarch quiet possession of that province. Grimsby then went with the rest of the troops to join their sovereign in Flanders. There he was recognised, and brought to judgment, by one of Heselrigge's captains; one who had been a particular favourite with that tyrant from their similarity of disposition, and to whom, after his return from Ellerslie, he had told the mutiny and desertion (as he called it) of Grimsby. But on the representation of the Earl of Lincoln, his punishment was mitigated from death to the

infliction of a certain number of lashes. This sentence, which the honest soldier regarded as worse than the loss of life, was executed. On stripping him at the halbert, the diamond clasp was found hanging round his neck. This was seized as a proof of some new crime: his general now gave him up; and in contempt of all his asseverations of innocence, so inconsistent were his judges, that while they allowed his treason (for so they stigmatized his manly resentment of Heselrigge's cruelty,) to prejudice them against him in this his second charge, they would not believe what was so probable, that this very jewel was given to him by a friend of Sir William Wallace, as a reward for his behaviour on that occasion. They decided, that he was a thorough villain, and unworthy to live. He appealed to Edward; but he appealed in vain; and on the following day was adjudged to be broken on the wheel for the robbery of this jewel. Every heart was callous to

his sufferings, but that of a poor woman, (the wife of his gaoler,) who fancied him like a brother of hers that had been killed ten years before in Italy; and at the dead of night she opened his prison-door and set him free. He fled into Normandy; and without a home, outlawed, branded as a traitor and a thief, he was wandering half desperate on the shore one stormy night, almost tempted by despair to plunge into the raging flood, when the cry of distress attracted his attention. A ship was stranded. He ran to the neighbouring fishermen; put off in the first boat himself; and with indefatigable labour, by rowing backwards and forwards, saved the whole crew. This was De Valence, in his way to Guienne. Chateau Galliard was the nearest residence, fit to receive the earl and his train. Thither they went, taking Grimsby along with them: and from the servants he learnt that the lady whom he had seen covered with a veil, was their lord's wife, and a

lunatic. He remained in the chateau, because he had no where else to go; and soon found, by accidental speeches from the lady's attendants, that she was not married to the earl, and was not only perfectly sane, but often most cruelly treated. Her name he had never heard until the last evening, when carrying some wine into the banquetting-room, De Valence mentioned it to the other stranger knight. He then retired, full of horror, resolving to essay her rescue himself; but the unexpected sight of the two knights in the hall, determined him to reveal the case to them. "This," added Grimsby, "is my story; and whoever you are, noble lord, if you think me not unworthy your protection, yield it to me, and you shall find me faithful unto death."

"I owe you that and more," replied the chief; "I am that Wallace on whose account you fled your country;—and, if you be willing to share the fortunes of one who may live and die in camps, I

pledge you that my best destiny shall be yours." Could Grimsby in his joyful surprise have thrown himself at the feet of Wallace, he would have done it; but taking hold of the drapery of his scarf he pressed it enthusiastically to his lips and exclaimed: "Bravest of the brave, this is beyond my prayers, to meet here, the triumphant lord of Scotland!—I fell innocently into disgrace; ah! how am I now exalted unto honour!—My country would have deprived me of life; I am therefore dead to it, and live only to gratitude and you?" "Then," replied Wallace, "as the first proof of the confidence I repose in you, know, that the young chief who is riding forward with Lady Helen, is Robert Bruce, the Prince of Scotland. Our next enterprise is to place him upon the throne of his ancestors. Meanwhile, till we license you to do otherwise, keep our proper names a secret, and call us by those we may hereafter think fit to assume."

Grimsby, once more reinstated in the station he deserved, that of trust and respect, no longer hung his head in abject despondency; but looking erect, as one born again from disgrace, he became the active, cheerful, and faithful servant of Wallace.

Helen, during Wallace's conversation with the soldier, listened with delight to the encomiums which Bruce passed upon his friend and champion. As his eloquent tongue described the merits of Wallace, and expressed an ardent gratitude for his having so gloriously supplied his place to Scotland; Helen turned her eyes upon the prince: before, she had scarcely remarked that he was more than young and handsome; but now, while she contemplated the noble confidence which breathed in every feature, she said to herself, "this man is worthy to be the friend of Wallace! His soul is a mirror to reflect all the brightness of Wallace's: ay, like as with the sun's rays, to kindle with Heaven's fire, all on whom it turns."

Bruce remarked the unusual animation of her eyes as she looked on him. "You feel, all I say of Wallace;" said he. But it was not a charge at which she need blush. It was addressed to that perception of exalted worth, which regards neither sex nor age. Helen did not misapprehend him.—The amiable frankness of his manner, seemed to open to him her heart. Wallace, she adored almost as a god; Bruce, she could love as a brother. It requires not time nor proof, to make virtuous hearts coalesce: there is a language without sounds, a recognition independent of the visual organ, which acknowledges the kindred of congenial souls almost in the moment they meet. "The virtuous mind knoweth its brother in the dark!"—This was said by the prince, whose soul sympathized in every noble purpose with that of Wallace; and Helen, impelled by the same principle, blushing with an emotion, untainted with any sensation of shame, replied, "I am grateful

to Heaven, that has allowed me to witness the goodness, to share the esteem of such a man—if a man he may be called."

"He is one of the few, Lady Helen," replied Bruce, "who is worthy of so august a title; and he brightly shews the image in which he was made; so humble, so dignified! so great, so lowly! so supereminent in all accomplishments of mind and body; wise, brave, and invincible, and yet forbearing, gentle, and unassuming: formed to be beloved, yet without a touch of vanity; loving all who approach him, without the least alloy of passion.—Ah! Lady Helen, he is a model after which I will fashion my life; for, he has written the character of the Son of God in his heart; and it shall be my study to transcribe the blessed copy into mine!"

Tears of rapture, glittered in the eye and on the smile of Helen. To answer Bruce, she found was impossible; but that her smile and look, were fully appreciated by him, his own told her; and stretching out

his hand to her, as she put hers into his, he said—"We are united in his heart, my sweet friend!"—At this moment Wallace joined them. He saw the action, and the animation of each countenance, and looked at Bruce with a glance of inquiry; but Bruce perceived nothing of a lover's jealousy in the look: it carried the wish of a friend, to share what had impressed them with such happy traits.

"We have been talking of you;" returned the prince; "and if to be beloved, is a source of joy, you must be peculiarly blest. The affections of Lady Helen and myself have met, and made your heart the altar on which we have pledged our fraternal love." Wallace regarded each with a look of penetrating tenderness. "It is my joy to love you both, as a brother; but Lady Helen must consider me as even more than that to her. I am her father's representative; I am the voice of grateful Scotland, thanking her

for the preservation her generous exertions yielded!—And to you, my prince, I am your friend, your subject, all that is devoted and true."

Thus, enjoying the dear communion of hearts, the interchange of mind, and mingling soul with soul, did these three friends journey towards the gates of Paris. Every day seemed an age of blessedness to Helen; so gratefully did she enjoy each passing moment of a happiness that seemed to speak of Paradise. Nature never before appeared so beautiful in her eyes: the sky was more serene, the birds sung with sweeter notes, the landscape shone in brighter charms; the fragrance of the flowers bathed her senses in softest balm, and the very air as it breathed around her, seemed fraught with life and joy. But Wallace animated the scene! and while she fancied that she inhaled his breath in every respiration, she moved as if on enchanted ground. Oh! she could have lingered there for ever! and hardly did

she know• what it was to draw any but sighs of bliss, till she saw the towers of Paris embattling the horizon. They reminded her that she was now going to be occasionally divided from him; that when entered within those walls, it would no longer be deemed decorous for her to pass days and nights in listening to his voice, in losing all of woman's love in the beatified affection of an angel.

This passion of the soul, (if such it may be called?) which has its rise in virtue, and its aim the same, would be most unjustly degraded were it classed with what the herd generally entitle love. The love which men stigmatize, deride, and yet encourage, is a fancy, an infatuation awakened by personal attractions, by—the lover knows not what; sometimes, by gratified vanity; sometimes by idleness; and often by the most debasing propensities of human nature. Earthy it is, and unto earth it shall return!—But love,

true heaven-born love, that pure affection which unites congenial spirits here, and with which the Creator will hereafter connect in one blest fraternity the whole kindred of mankind, has but one cause,—the universal fairness of its object;—that bright perfection, which speaks of unchangeableness and immortality; a something so excellent, that the simple wish to partake its essence in the union of affection, to facilitate and to share its attainment of true and lasting happiness, invigorates our virtue, and inspires our souls. These are the aims and joys of real love. It has nothing selfish: in every desire it soars above this earth; and anticipates, as the ultimatum of its joy, the moment when it shall meet its partner before the throne of God. Such was the sentiment of Helen towards Wallace. So unlike what she had seen in others, of the universal passion, that she would hardly have acknowledged to herself that what she felt was love, had

not the anticipation of even an hour's separation from him whispered the secret to her heart.

## CHAP. XIII.

WHEN they were arrived at a short distance from Paris, Wallace wrote a few lines to King Philip, informing him who were the companions of his journey, and that he should rest in the abbey of St. Denis until he should receive his majesty's greetings to Bruce. Grimsby was the bearer of this letter. He soon returned with an escort of honour, headed by Prince Louis, who was eager to welcome his deliverer. At sight of Wallace, he flew into his arms; and after embracing him again and again with all the un-

checked ardour of youthful fondness, he presented to him a packet from the King.

It expressed the satisfaction of Philip at his near prospect of seeing the man whom he had so long admired, and whose valour had wrought him such a service as the preservation of his son.—He then added, that he had other matters to thank him for, when they should meet, and subjects to discuss, which would be much elucidated by the presence of Bruce. "According to your request," continued he, "the name of neither shall be made public at my court: my own family only, know who are to be my illustrious guests; and the queen is impatient to bid them welcome, and to greet the Lady Helen Mar with her friendship and protection."

A beautiful palfrey, superbly caparisoned, and tossing its fair neck amid the splendour of its jewelled chanfraine, presented itself. A page led it forward; and two ladies, bearing rich apparel for Helen, drew near the abbey porch, where

Wallace stood. When their errand was made known to him, he communicated it to Helen. Her declicacy would have wished to lay aside her page's apparel before she was presented to the queen!—but she had been so happy while she wore it;—" Days have past with me in these garments," said she to herself, " which may never happen again!" The ladies were conducted to her. They delivered a gracious message from their royal mistress, and opened the caskets. Helen sighed: she could urge nothing in opposition to their embassy, and reluctantly assented to the change they were to make in her appearance. She stood mute, while they disarrayed her of her humble guise, and clothed her in the robes of France. During their attendance, in the adulatory strains of the court, they broke out in encomiums on the graces of her person; but to all this she turned an inattentive ear: her mind was absorbed in

what she had enjoyed; in the splendid penance she was to undergo.

One of the women was throwing the page's clothes carelessly into a bag, when Helen perceiving her, said, "Take care of that suit, it is more precious to me than gold or jewels." "Indeed!" answered the attendant, more carefully folding it; "it does not seem of very rich silk." "Probably not," returned Helen, "but it is valuable to me, and wherever I lodge, I will thank you to put it into my apartment."—A mirror was now presented, that she might see herself. She started at the load of pearls with which they had adorned her; and while a tear stood in either eye, she mildly said, "I am a mourner; these ornaments must not be worn by me." The ladies obeyed her wish to have them taken off: and with thoughts divided between her father and her father's friend, she was conducted towards the palfrey. Wallace approached

her; and Bruce flew forward with his usual haste, to assist her:—but it was no longer the beautiful little page that met his view, the confidential and frank glance of a youthful brother!—It was a lovely woman, arrayed in all the charms of female apparel; and trembling, and blushing, as she again appeared as a woman, before the eyes of the man she loved. Wallace bowed as he touched her hand, for there was something in her air which seemed to say, "I am not what I was a few minutes ago."—It was the aspect of a strange austerity, the decorum of rank and situation;—not of the heart;—that, had never been absent from the conduct of Helen: had she been in the wilds of Africa with no other companion than Wallace, still would those chaste reserves which lived in her soul, have been there the guardians of her actions; for modesty was as much the attribute of her person, as magnanimity was the character of her soul.

Her particularly distant air at this time, was the effect of her reflections while in the abbey. She saw that the frank intercourse between her and her friend, was to be interrupted by the forms of a court; and her manner insensibly assumed the demeanour she was so soon to wear. Bruce looked at her with delighted wonder. He had before admired her as beautiful; he now gazed on her as transcendently so.—He checked himself in his swift step—he paused to look on her and Wallace; and contemplating them with sentiments of unmingled admiration, this exclamation unconsciously escaped him—" How lovely!"—He could not but wish to see two such perfectly amiable and perfectly beautiful beings, united as closely by the bonds of the world, as he believed they were in heart; and he longed for the hour, when he might endow them with those proofs of his fraternal love, which should class them with the first of Scottish princes. " But how," thought he, " can I

ever sufficiently reward thee, Wallace, for what thou hast done for me and mine? Thy services are beyond all price; thy soul is above even empires. Then how can I shew thee all that is in my heart for thee?" While he thus apostrophized his friend, Wallace and Helen advanced towards him. Bruce held out his hand to her with a cordial smile: "Lady Helen, we are still to be the same! Robes of no kind, are ever to separate the affections born in our pilgrimage!" She put her hand into his with a glow of delight; "While Sir William Wallace allows me to call him brother," answered she, "that will ever be a sanction to our friendship: but courts are formal places, and I now go to one." "And I will soon remove you to another," replied he, "where——" he hesitated—looked at Wallace, and then resumed; "where every wish of my sister Helen's heart shall be gratified, or I be no king." Helen blushed deeply, and hastened towards the palfrey. Wallace

placed her on the embroidered saddle; and Prince Louis preceding the cavalcade, it moved on.

As Bruce vaulted into his seat, he said something to his friend, declarative of his admiration of the perfectly feminine beauty of Helen. "But her soul is fairer!" returned Wallace. The prince of Scotland, with a gay but tender smile softly whispered, "Fair, doubly fair to you!" Wallace drew a deep sigh: "I never knew but one woman who resembled her; and she did indeed excel all of created mould. From infancy to manhood, I read every thought of her angelic heart: I became the purer by the study; and I loved my model with an idolatrous adoration. There was my error! But those sympathies, those hours are past. My heart will never throb as it has throbbed, never rejoice as it has rejoiced; for she who lived but for me, who doubled all my joys, is gone!—Oh! my prince, though blest with friendship, there are

times when I feel that I am solitary!"——Bruce looked at him with surprise and interest: "Solitary! Wallace! can you ever be solitary, and near Helen Mar?" "Perhaps more so then, than at any other time, for her beauties, her excellencies, remind me of what were once mine, and recal every regret. O! Bruce! thou canst not comprehend my loss! To mingle thought with thought, and soul with soul, for years; and then, after blending our very beings, and feeling as if indeed made one,—to be separated—and by a stroke of violence! This was a trial of the spirit which, but for Heaven's mercy, would have crushed me. I live, but still my heart will mourn; mourn her I have lost, and mourn that my rebellious nature will not be more resigned to the judgments of its God."

"And is love so constant?" exclaimed Bruce; "Is it to consume your youth, Wallace? Is it to wed such a heart as yours, to the tomb?—Ah! am I not to

hope, that the throne of my children may be upheld by a race of thine?" Wallace shook his head; but with a placid firmness replied, "Your throne, and your children's, if they follow your example, will be upheld by Heaven: but should they pervert themselves, a host of mortal supports, would not be sufficient to stay their downfal."

In discourse like this, the youthful prince of Scotland caught a clearer view of the inmost thoughts of his friend, than he had been able to discern before; for war, or Bruce's own interests, having particularly engaged them in all their former conversations, Wallace had never been induced to glance at the private circumstances of his history. While Bruce sighed, in tender pity for the captivated heart of Helen, he the more deeply revered, more intensely loved, his suffering and heroic friend.

A few hours brought the royal escort to the gates of the Louvre; and through

a train of nobles, who stood on the marble pavement, Lady Helen, followed by the Scottish chiefs, was led into the audience-chamber by Prince Louis. Philip, who, as he had much to say to Wallace, intended to see him first alone, on hearing of his approach, retired to his closet. The queen, and the Count D'Evereux, received Bruce and Helen, while De Valois conducted Wallace to the King.

At sight of the armour which he had sent to the preserver of his son, Philip instantly recognised the Scottish hero, and rising from his seat, hastened forward and clasped him in his arms: "Wonder not august chief," exclaimed he, "at the weakness, exhibited in these eyes! It is the tribute of nature, to a virtue, which loads even kings with benefits. You have saved my son's life, you have preserved from taint the honour of my sister!"—Philip then proceeded to inform his auditor, that he had heard from a confessor

of Queen Margaret's, just arrived from England, all that had lately happened at Edward's court; and of Wallace's letter, to clear the innocence of that injured princess. "She is perfectly reinstated in the King's confidence," added Philip; "but I can never pardon the infamy with which he would have overwhelmed her; nay, it has already dishonoured her; for the blasting effects of slander no time nor labour can erase. I yield to the prayers of my too gentle sister, not to openly resent this wrong, but in secret I will make him feel a brother's indignation. I do not declare war against him; but ask what you will, bravest of men, and were it to place the crown of Scotland on your head, demand it of me, and by my concealed agency, it shall be effected." The reply of Wallace was simple. He claimed no merit, in the justice he had done the Queen of England; neither in his rescue of Prince Louis; but as a proof of King Philip's friendship, he gladly embraced his offer-

ed services with regard to Scotland.— "Not," added he, "to send troops into that country against England. Scotland is now free of its Southron invaders; all I require is, that you will use your royal influence with Edward, to allow it to remain so. Pledge your faith, most gracious monarch, with my master the royally descended Bruce, who is now in your palace. He will soon assume the crown that is his right; and with such an ally as France, to hold the ambition of Edward in check, we may certainly hope that the bloody feuds between Scotland and England may at last be laid at rest."

Wallace explained to Philip the dispositions of the Scots, the nature of Bruce's claims, and the transcendent virtues of his youthful character. The monarch took fire at the speaker's enthusiasm, and giving him his hand, exclaimed, "Wallace, I know not what manner of man you are! You seem born to dictate to kings, while you put aside, as things of no mo-

ment, the crowns offered to yourself— You are young, and, marvelling, I would say without ambition; did I not know, that your deeds, and your virtues, have set you above all earthly titles. But to convince me, that you do not disdain the gratitude we pay, at least accept a name in my country! and know, that the armour you wear, the coronet around your helmet, invested you with the rank of a prince of France, and the title of Count of Gascony."(r) To have refused this mark of the monarch's esteem, would have been an act of churlish pride foreign from the character of Wallace. He graciously accepted the offered distinction; and bowing his head, allowed the King to throw the brilliant collar of Gascony over his neck.

This act was performed by Philip with all the emotions of disinterested esteem. But when he had proposed it to his brothers, as the only way he could devise of rewarding Wallace, for the preservation of

his son and the honour of their sister; he was obliged to urge in support of his wish, the desire he had, to take the first opportunity of being revenged on Edward, by the re-seizure of Guienne. To have Sir William Wallace Lord of Gascony, would then be of the greatest advantage; as no doubt could be entertained, of his arms, soon restoring the sister province to the French monarchy. In such a case, Philip promised to bestow Guienne on his brother D'Evereux.

To attach his new count to France, was now all the wish of Philip; and he closed the conference, with every expression of friendship which man could deliver to man. Wallace lost not the opportunity of pleading for the abdicated King of Scots; and Philip, eager, as well to evince his resentment to Edward, as to oblige Wallace, promised to send immediate orders to Normandy, that De Valence should leave chateau Galliard,

and Baliol be attended with his former state.

The King then led his guest into the audience-chamber, where they found her majesty seated between Bruce and Helen. At sight of the Scottish chief, she rose. Philip led him up to her; and Wallace, bending his knee, put the fair hand she extended, to his lips.—" Welcome," said she, " bravest of knights! receive a mother, a sister's thanks." Tears of gratitude stood in her eyes. She clasped the hand of her son and his together, and added, " Louis, wherever our Count of Gascony advises you to pledge this hand, give it." " Then it will follow mine!" cried the King, putting his into that of Bruce: " You are Wallace's acknowledged sovereign, young prince, and you shall ever find brothers in me and my son!— Sweet lady," added he, turning to Helen, " thanks to your charms, for having drawn this friend of mankind, to bless our shores!

—When you take him hence, (continued he in a tone, that none but herself heard) it must be to reward him with beauties, which might involve another Troy in flames!" Helen blushed deeply. Her heart glowed amidst its agitated throbbings; for, during this long, circuitous journey, his endearing care had almost unconsciously awakened a hope, which now, in a still small voice, whispered an echo to the wish of Philip.

The court knew Wallace, merely as Count of Gascony: and to preserve an equal concealment, Bruce assumed the name of the young De Longueville; whom prince Louis had, in fact, allowed to leave him on the road to Paris, and to go to Chartres, there to pass a year of mourning within its penitential monastery. Only two persons ever came to the Louvre, who might recognise Bruce to be other than he seemed; and they were John Cummin, the elder twin brother of the present Regent of Scotland—and

James Lord Douglas. The former remained in France, out of dislike to his brother's proceedings; and as Bruce knew him in Guienne, and believed him to be a blunt well-meaning young man, he saw no danger in trusting him. The brave son of William Douglas, was altogether of a nobler mettle; and both Wallace and his prince rejoiced at the prospect of receiving him to their friendship.

Philip opened the affair to the two lords, and having declared his designs in favour of Bruce, conducted them into the audience-room, and pointing where he stood, "There," said he, "is the King of Scotland, whose cause I mean to support to my last gasp!" Douglas and Cummin would have bent their knees to their young monarch, but Bruce hastily caught their hands and prevented the action: "My friends," said he, "regard me as your fellow-soldier only, till you see me on the throne of my fathers. Till then, that is our prince," said he, look-

ing on Wallace; "he is my leader, my counsellor, my example! And, if you love me, he must be yours." Douglas and Cummin turned towards Wallace at these words. Royalty did indeed sit on his brow, but with a tempered majesty which spoke only in love and honour. From the resplendent countenance of Bruce, it smiled and threatened; for the blaze of his impassioned nature was not yet subdued. The queen looked from the one to the other. The divinely composed air of Wallace, seemed to her the celestial port of some heaven-descended being, lent awhile to earth, to guide the steps of the prince of Scotland. She had read in Homer's song, of the deity of wisdom assuming the form of Mentor to protect the son of Ulysses; and had it not been for the youth of the Scottish chief, she would have said, here is the realization of the tale.

Helen had eyes for none but Wallace. Nobles, princes, kings, were all involved

in one uninteresting mass to her when he was present. Yet she smiled on Douglas, when she heard him express his gratitude to the champion of Scotland for the services he had done a country for which his own father had died. Cummin, when he paid his respects to Wallace, told him that he did it with double pleasure, as he had two unquestionable evidences of his unequalled merit; the confidence of his father the Lord Badenoch, and the hatred of his brother the present usurper of that title.

The King soon after led his guests to the council-room, where a secret cabinet was to be held, to settle the future bonds between the two kingdoms; and Helen, looking long after the departing figure of Wallace, with a pensive step followed the queen to her apartment.

## CHAP. XIV.

THESE preliminaries of lasting friendship, being arranged, and sworn to, by Philip; Wallace dispatched a messenger to Scotland, to Lord Ruthven at Hunting tower, informing him of all that had happened to him since their separation, and of his present designs with regard to Scotland. He made particular inquiries respecting the state of the public mind; and declared his intentions, not to introduce Bruce amongst the cabals of his chieftains, until he knew exactly how they were all disposed. Some weeks passed, before a reply to this letter arrived. During this time, the health of Helen, which had been much impaired by the sufferings inflicted on her by De Valence,

gradually recovered; and her beauty became as much the admiration of the French nobles, as her meek dignity was of their respect. A new scene of royalty presented itself in this gay court, to Wallace, for all was pageant and chivalric gallantry; but it had no other effect on him, than that of exciting those benevolent affections, which rejoiced in the innocent gaiety of his fellow-beings. His pensiveness was not that of a cynic. Though hilarity never awakened his mind to buoyant mirth, yet he loved to see it in others, and gently smiled when others laughed.

With a natural superiority, which looked over these court pastimes, to objects of greater moment, Bruce merely endured them; but it was with an urbanity congenial with his friend's: and while the princes of France were treading the giddy mazes of the dance, or tilting at each other in the mimic war of the tournament, the prince of Scotland, who excelled in all these exercises, left the field

of gallantry undisputed; and moved in the splendid scene, an uninterested spectator, talking with Wallace, or with Helen, on events which yet lay in fate; and whose theatre would be the field of his native land. So accustomed had the friends now been, to share their thoughts with Lady Helen, that they imparted to her all their plans; and listened with pleasure, to her timid, yet judicious remarks. Her soul was inspired with the same zeal for Scotland which animated their own breasts: like Bruce's, it was ardent; but like Wallace's, it was tempered with a moderation, which gave her foresight, and freed her opinion from the hazard of rashness. What he possessed by the suggestions of genius, or had acquired by experience, she learnt from love. It taught her to be careful for the safety of Wallace: and while she saw that his life must often be put in peril for Scotland, her watchful spirit, with an eagle's ken

perceived where his exposure might incur danger, without advantage.

The winds of this season of the year, being violent and often adverse, Wallace's messenger did not arrive at his destined port in Scotland, till the middle of November; and the January of 1299 had commenced, before his returning barque entered the mouth of the Seine.

Wallace was alone, when Grimsby, opening the door, announced Sir Edwin Ruthven. In a moment the friends were locked in each others arms. Edwin, straining Wallace to his heart, reproached him in affectionate terms for having left him behind; but while he spoke, joy shone through the tears which hung on his eye-lids, and with the smiles of fraternal love, again and again he kissed his friend's hand and pressed it to his bosom. Wallace, answered his glad emotions with similar demonstrations of affection; and when the agitations of their meeting were

subdued, he learned from Edwin, that he had left the messenger at some distance on the road; so impatient was he, again to embrace his friend, and to congratulate his dear cousin on her escape.

Edwin answered the anxious inquiries of Wallace respecting his country, by informing him, that Badenoch having arrogated to himself the supreme power in Scotland, had determined to take every advantage of the last victory gained over King Edward; and in this resolution he was supported by the lords Athol, Buchan, and Soulis, who were returned, full of indignation, from the court of Durham. Edward removed to London: and Badenoch, hearing that he was preparing other armies for the subjugation of Scotland, sent embassadors to the Vatican to solicit the pope's interference. Boniface, flattered by this appeal, wrote a letter to Edward, exhorting him to refrain from further oppressing a country, over which he had no lawful power. Ed-

ward's answer was full of artifice and falsehood; maintaining his pretensions to Scotland by the abandonment of every good principle; and declaring his determination to consolidate Great Britain into one kingdom, or to make the northern part, one universal grave.(s) Wallace sighed as he listened. "Ah! my dear Edwin," said he, "how just is the observation, that the almost total neglect of truth and justice, which the generality of sovereigns discover in their transactions with each other, is an evil as inveterate, as it is dishonourable and ruinous! It is one source of the misery of the human race; a misery in which millions are involved, without any compensation; for it seldom happens that this dishonesty contributes, ultimately, even to the interests of the princes who thus basely sacrifice their integrity to their ambition. But proceed, my friend."

The consequences of this correspondence, Edwin said, was a renewal of hos-

tilities against Scotland. Badenoch took Sir Simon Fraser as his colleague in military duty, and a stout resistance was for some time made on the borders; but Berwick was at last taken by Lord Percy, and the brave Lord Dundaff killed defending the citadel. Many other places fell; and battles were fought, in which the English were every where victorious: "For," added Edwin, "none of your generals would draw a sword under the command of Badenoch; and alarmed at the consequence, the bishop of Dunkeld is gone to Rome, to entreat the pope to order your return. The Southrons are advancing into Scotland in every direction. They have landed again on the eastern coast; they have possessed themselves of all the border counties; and without your Heaven-anointed arm to avert the blow, our country must be irretrievably lost."

Edwin had brought letters from Ruthven, and the young Earl of Bothwell,

which more particularly narrated these disastrous events; and enforced every argument, to persuade Wallace to return. They gave it as their opinion, that he should revisit Scotland under an assumed name. Did he come openly, the jealousy of the Scottish lords would be re-awakened; and perhaps they might put the finishing stroke to their country, by taking him off by assassination or poison. Ruthven and Bothwell, therefore, entreated that, as it was his wisdom, as well as his valour, his country required, he would hasten to Scotland, and condescend to serve her unrecognised, till Bruce should be established on the throne.

While Edwin was conducted to the apartments of Lady Helen, Wallace took these letters to his prince. On Bruce being informed of the circumstances in which his country lay, and of the wishes of its most virtuous chiefs for his accession to the crown, he assented to

the prudence of their advice with regard to Wallace. "But," added he, "our fortunes must in every respect, as far as I can mould them, be the same. While you are to serve Scotland under a cloud, so will I. At the moment Bruce is proclaimed King of Scotland, Wallace shall be declared its bravest friend. We will go together: as brothers, if you will!" continued he; "I am already considered by the French nobility, as Thomas de Longueville; you may personate the Red Reaver:—Scotland does not yet know that he was slain. Were you to wear the title you bear here, a quarrel might ensue between Philip and Edward, which I perceive the former is not willing should occur openly. Edward would deem it a breach of their amity, did he permit a French prince to appear in arms against him in Scotland. But the Reaver, being considered in England as an outlaw; no surprise can be excited, that he, and his brother, should fight

against Philip's ally. We will then assume their characters; and I shall have the satisfaction of serving for Scotland, before I claim her as my own. When we again drive Edward over the borders, on that day we will throw off our visors, and Sir William Wallace shall place the crown on my head."

Wallace could not but approve the dignity of mind which these sentiments displayed. In the same situation, they would have been his own; and he sought not, from any motive of policy, to dissuade Bruce from a delicacy of conduct which drew him closer to his heart. Sympathy of tastes is a pleasing attraction; but congeniality of principles is the cement of souls. This Wallace felt in his new-born friendship with Bruce; and though his regard for him had none of that fostering tenderness with which he loved to contemplate the blooming virtues of the youthful Edwin, yet it breathed every endearment arising from a perfect equal-

ity in heart and mind. It was the true fraternal tie; and while he talked with him on the fulfilment of their enterprise, he inwardly thanked Heaven for blessing him so abundantly. He had found a son in Edwin; and a brother, and tender sister, in the noble Bruce, and lovely Helen.

Bruce received Edwin with a welcome, which convinced the before anxious youth, that he met a friend, rather than a rival, in the heart of Wallace. And every preliminary being settled by the three friends, respecting their immediate return to Scotland, they repaired to Philip, to inform him of Lord Ruthven's dispatches, and their consequent resolutions.

The King liked all they said, excepting their request to be permitted to take an early leave of his court. He urged them to await the return of a second embassador, he had sent to England. Immediately on Wallace's arrival, Philip had dispatched a request to the English King,

that he would grant the Scots the peace which was their right. Not receiving any answer, he had sent another messenger, with a more categorical demand. The persevered hostilities of Edward against Scotland, explained the delay. But the King yet hoped for a favourable reply; and made such entreaties to Bruce, and his friend, to remain in Paris till it should arrive, that they at last granted a reluctant consent.

At the end of a week, the embassador returned with a conciliatory letter to Philip; but affirming Edward's right to Scotland, declared his determination, to have the whole realm again under his sceptre, before the termination of the month.

Wallace and his royal friend now saw no reason for lingering in France. And having visited De Longueville at Chartres, they apprized him of their intention, still further to borrow his name. "We will not disgrace it;" cried Bruce; "I pro-

mise to return it to you, a theme for your country's minstrels!" When the friends rose to depart, the brave and youthful penitent grasped their hands—"You go, valiant Scots, to cover with glory, in the field of honour, a name, which my unhappy brother Guy, dyed deep in his country's blood! The tears I weep before this cross, for his, and my transgression, have obtained me mercy: and your design, is an earnest to me from Him who hung on this tree, that my brother also is forgiven."

At an early hour next day, Wallace and Bruce took leave of the French King. The queen kissed Helen affectionately, and whispered, while she tied a jewelled collar round her neck, that when she returned, she hoped to add to it the coronet of Gascony. Helen's only reply was a gentle sigh, and her eye turned unconsciously on Wallace. He was clad in a plain suit of black armour, with a red plume in his helmet; the ensign of the

Reaver, whose name he had assumed. All of his former habit, that he now wore about him, was the sword which he had taken from Edward. Prince Louis, at the moment Helen looked towards Wallace, was placing a cross-hilted dagger in his girdle. "My deliverer," said he, "wear this for the sake of the descendant of St. Louis. It accompanied that holy king through all his wars in Palestine. It twice saved him from the assassin's steel; and I pray Heaven it may prove as faithful a guard to you!"

Soon after this, Douglas and Cummin entered, to pay their parting respects to the King; and that over, Wallace taking Helen by the hand, led her forth, followed by Bruce and his friends, to her horse.

At Dieppe they embarked for the frith of Tay; and a favourable gale driving them through the straits of Calais, they launched out in the wide ocean.

## CHAP. XV.

THE eighth morning from the day in which the Red Reaver's ship was re-launched from the harbour of Dieppe, Wallace, its present commander, and now the representative of that once formidable pirate, entered between the castled shores of the frith of Tay, and cast anchor under the towers of Dundee. As he bore the white flag of peace, no opposition was made to his landing; and the sight of Sir Edwin Ruthven, who was the first to leap on the beach, satisfied the inhabitants that all who came with him must be friends to Scotland.

When Bruce first set foot upon the land, he turned to Wallace, and said with exultation, though in a low voice, "Scotland now receives her King! This

earth shall cover me, or support my throne!" "It shall support your throne, and bless it too;" replied Wallace; "you are come in the power of justice, and that is the power of God. I know Him, in whom I bid you confide; for He has been my shield and sword, and never yet have I turned my back upon my enemies. Trust, my dear prince, where I have trusted; and while virtue is your incense, you need not doubt the issue of your prayers." Had Wallace seen the face of Bruce at that moment, but the visor concealed it, he would have beheld an answer in his eloquent eyes which required not words to explain. He grasped the hand of Wallace with fervour, and briefly replied—"Your trust shall be my trust!"

The chiefs did not stay longer at Dundee, than was requisite to furnish them with horses to convey them to Perth, where Ruthven still bore sway. When they arrived, he was at Hunting tower, and thither they went. The meeting was

fraught with many mingled feelings. Helen had not seen her uncle since the death of her father; and, as soon as the first gratulations were over, she retired to an apartment to weep alone.

Lord Ruthven, on Cummin's being presented to him, told him, he must now salute him as Earl of Badenoch, for that his brother, the late Regent, had been killed, a few days before, in a battle on the skirts of Ettrick forest. He then turned to welcome the entrance of Bruce, who, raising his visor, received from Ruthven the homage due to his sovereign dignity. Wallace, and the prince, soon engaged him in a discourse immediately connected with the design of their return; and learnt that Scotland did indeed require the royal arm, and the counsel of its best, and lately, almost banished friend. The whole of the eastern part of the country, was in the possession of Edward's generals. They had seized on every castle in the lowlands: none were

too insignificant to escape their hands; nor could the quiet of age elude the general devastation. All were doomed to death and ruin; and in the midst of the wide destruction, after a dauntless defence, in which the veteran knight of Thirlestane behaved with a steady valour miraculous in so old a man, he fell, and with himself, his only son and his castle. The sage of Ercildown, having protected Lady Isabella Mar at Learmont, during the siege of Thirlestane, on hearing its fate, conveyed her northward; but falling sick at Roslyn, he stopped there: and the messenger, he dispatched to Hunting tower with these calamitous tidings, also bore information, that besides several parties of Southrons which were hovering on the heights near Roslyn, an immense army was approaching from Northumberland. Ercildown added, that he understood Sir Simon Fraser was hastening forward with a small body, to cut off the advanced squadrons; but, from the con-

tentions between Athol and Soulis for the vacant regency, he had no hopes, even were his forces equal to those of England, that he could succeed.

At this communication, Cummin bluntly proposed himself as the terminator of this dispute. "If the regency were allowed to my brother, as head of the house of Cummin, that dignity now rests with me; and—give the word, my sovereign," said he, addressing Bruce, "and none there shall dare to oppose my rights."—Ruthven approved this proposal: and Wallace, deeming it, not only the best way of silencing the pretensions of those old disturbers of the public tranquillity, but a happy opportunity of putting the chief magistracy into the hands of a confident of their design, seconded the advice of Ruthven; and John Cummin, Lord Badenoch, was immediately invested with the regency, and dispatched to the army to assume it, as if in right of his being

next heir to the throne in default of the Bruce.

Wallace, sent Lord Douglas into Clydesdale, to inform Earl Bothwell of his arrival; and to desire his immediate attendance with the Lanerk division, and his own troops, on the banks of the Eske. Ruthven ascended the Grampians to call out the numerous clans of Perthshire: and Wallace and his prince prepared themselves for meeting these auxiliaries before the towers of Roslyn. Meanwhile, as Hunting tower would be an insecure asylum for Helen, when it should be left to domestics alone, Wallace proposed to Edwin, that he should escort his cousin to Braemar; and place her there, under the care of his mother, and the widowed Countess. "Thither," continued he, "we will send Lady Isabella also, should Heaven bless our arms at Roslyn." Edwin acquiesced, as he was to return with all speed to join his friend on the southern

bank of the Forth: and Helen, aware that fields of blood were no scenes for her; while her heart was wrung to agony, at the thought of relinquishing Wallace to dangers, which threatened to deprive her of him for ever; yielded a reluctant assent —not merely to go, but to take that look of him which might be the last.

The sight of her uncle, and the objects around, had so recalled the days of her infancy, when in this castle she enjoyed the fond caresses of her father, that, ever since she arrived, a sadness had hung over her spirits which often dissolved her into tears. She was now to bid adieu to Wallace. She remembered, that a few months ago, she had seen her father go out to a battle, whence he never returned.—— Should the same doom await her with regard to Wallace!—This idea shook her whole frame with an agitation, that sunk her, in spite of herself, on the bosom of Wallace when Edwin approached to lead her to her horse. Her emotions pene-

trated the heart against which she leaned. "My gentle sister," said Wallace, "do not despair of our final success; of the safety of all whom you regard." "Ah! Wallace," faltered she, in a voice rendered hardly audible by tears; "but did I not lose my father?"—"Sweet Helen," returned he, tenderly retaining her trembling form, which she now attempted, but feebly from her emotion, to extricate from his arms, "you lost him, but he gained by the exchange. And should the peace of Scotland, be purchased by the lives of some who contend for her emancipation; should they even be your friends, if Bruce survives, you must still think your prayers blest. Were I to fall, my sister, my sorrows would be over; and from the region of universal blessedness, I should enjoy the sight of Scotland's happiness, with unmixed felicity."

"Were we all to enter those regions at one time," faintly replied Helen, "there would be comfort in such thoughts; but

as it is——" here she paused; tears stopped her utterance. "A few years, is a short separation," returned Wallace, "when we are, hereafter, to be united to all eternity. This is my consolation, when I think of Marion;—when memory dwells with the friends, lost in these dreadful conflicts: and, whatever may be the fate of those who now survive, call to remembrance my words, dear Helen, and the God, who was my instructor, will send you comfort."

"Then farewel my friend, my brother!" cried she, forcibly tearing herself away, and throwing herself into the arms of Edwin; "leave me now; and the angel of the just, will bring you in glory, here, or hereafter, to your sister Helen." Wallace fervently kissed the hand she extended to him; and with an emotion, which he had thought he should never feel again for mortal woman, left the apartment.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

# NOTES

TO THE FOURTH VOLUME OF

# THE SCOTTISH CHIEFS.

([a] p. 5.) Sir Colin Campbell, surnamed More, (great), from his extraordinary valour, was the father of Neil Campbell, Lord of Loch-awe; and in memory of his renown, the head or chief of his family was for ages after distinguished by the title of *Mack-callan-more*, which means *son of the great Colin*.

([b] p. 5.) John Cummin, Lord of Badenoch (usually called the Black Cummin) married Marjory, sister to Baliol, King of Scots. In the year 1290, Lord Badenoch was one of the competitors for the crown, as heir, in the seventh generation, from Donald King of Scots.

([c] p. 20.) *Brandanes* was the distinguishing appellation of the military followers of the chiefs of Bute.

([d] p. 40.) The jealousy of the lords against Wallace, and the particulars of the battle of Falkirk, with his discourse with Bruce on the banks of the Carron, are well known events in Scottish annals; and the writer of this work has spared no researches to bring the account, here presented, as near the fact as possible. Since the publication of the first edition of this work, the inhabitants of Falkirk, have erected a pillar to the memory of Wallace, on the hill where he drew up his army.

([e] p. 45.) William Sinclair, the brave and patriotic bishop of Dunkeld, was brother to the Lord of Roslyn.

([f] p. 46.) Dunipacis, means the hills of peace. There are two on the banks of the Carron; and are supposed to have been erected by the Normans in some treaty with the natives.

([g] p. 80.) The lamentations which Sir William Wallace made over the body of Sir John Graham, his faithful friend, are recorded by several historians; and this epitaph is still extant on that warrior's grave in the church of Falkirk. The literal English of it is this:

"Here lies Graham, slain in battle by the English: He was powerful in mind and body; and was the faithful friend [Achates] of Wallace."

Not far from Graham's tomb, is buried John Stewart; Lord of Bute, and brother to the Steward of Scotland, from whom the royal family of that name descended. His grave is marked by a plain stone without any inscription.

([h] p. 102.) The family of Cummin was so powerful and numerous, that an incredible number of chieftains of that name attended the first parliament which Robert I. held at Dunstaffnage castle. The relationship between the heiress of Strathearn and that family, was very near; her paternal grandmother having been the daughter of a Lord Badenoch.

([i] p. 138.) In commemoration of the victory which this ancient Scottish prince obtained over the Britons before the christian era, the field of conquest has ever since been called Rutherglen.

([k] p. 139.) A senachie (or bard) was an indispensable appendage of rank in every noble Scottish family. The senachie always slept in his lord's apartment.

([l] p. 140.) This round tower (or keep) is the only part of the castle of Durham in any good preservation.

([m] p. 155.) These speeches are historically true;

as is also, the after-treatment of Edward to the Earl of Carrick.

([n] p. 167.) It is a superstition with the lower orders in the north, that when a man is going to die, some of his friends see his apparition, which they call his *wraith*, and they say it often appears in the presence of the doomed person.

([o] p. 193.) The remains of this curious subterraneous passage are yet to be seen: but parts of them are now broken in upon by water, and therefore the communication between Durham and Fincklay is now cut off. Many strange legends are told of this passage.

([p] p. 219.) The poet, Blind Harrie, gives a very interesting account of the particulars of this naval engagement. The author of "Scottish Chiefs," dedicated a chapter to the same subject, but finding it swell her pages too largely, she superseded it by these few summary lines.

([q] p. 261.) This renunciation of Baliol's in favour of Bruce, is an historical fact; and it was made in France. Buchanan relates it in these words:

"Baliol, being surrounded with the miseries of old age, ingenuously confessed that his peccant exorbitance

was justly restrained; and that he was deservedly driven out of the kingdom, as unworthy to reign. And, therefore, he was very willing, that his kinsman Robert should enjoy the crown, by whose high valour, singular felicity, and great pains-taking, 'twas vindicated into its ancient splendour. In one thing he rejoiced, that they, by whom he was deceived, did not enjoy the reward of their perfidiousness."

([r] p. 344.) Harrie is the authority for this investiture. He comprehends in the province with which Philip endowed Wallace, both Guienne and Gascony. But the division made here is more consonant with history.

([s] p. 356.) Both these curious letters are extant in Holinshed.

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